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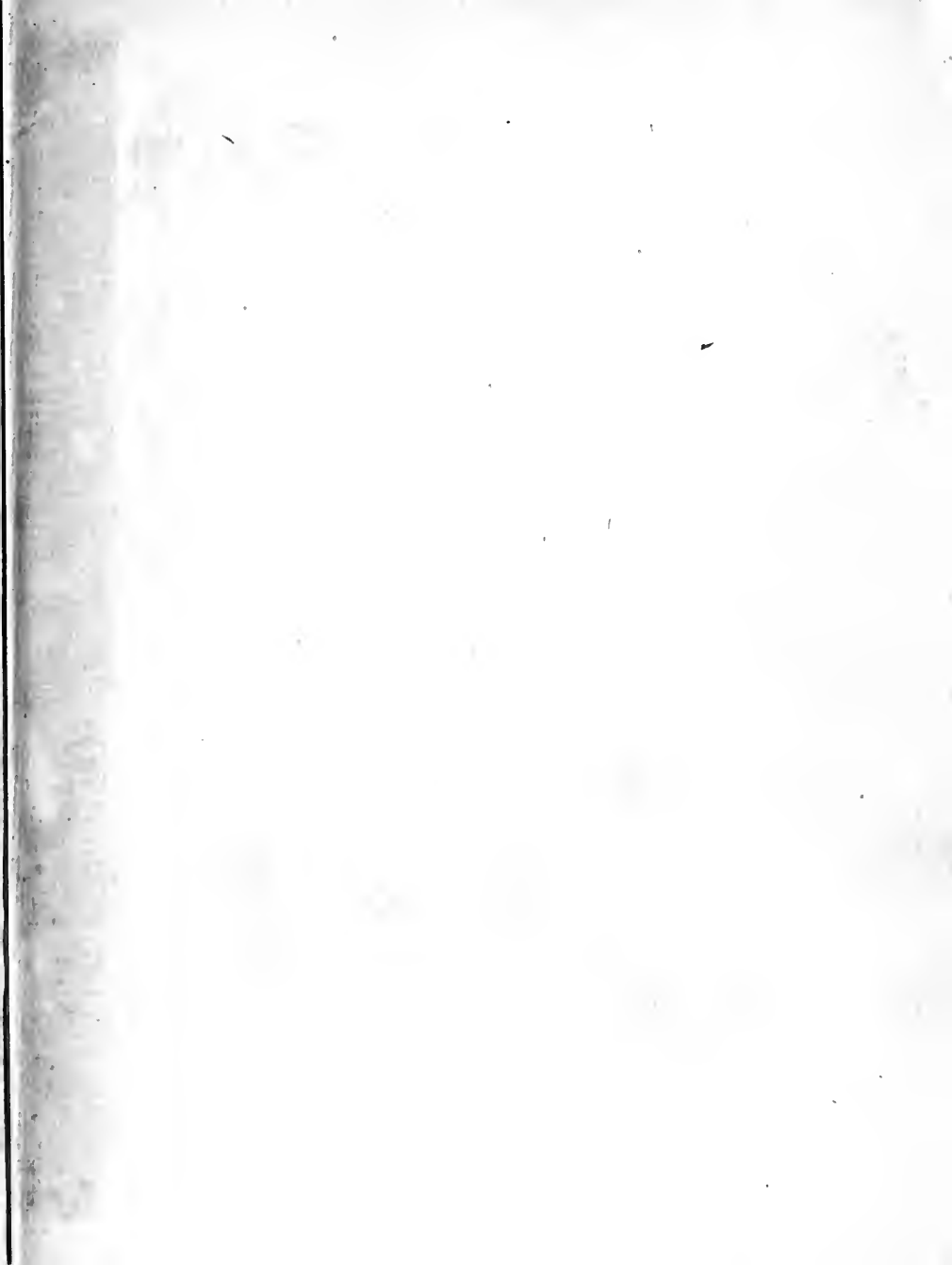
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AN
IMAGED
WORLD

POEMS IN
PROSE
BY
EDWARD
GARNETT.

WITH DRAWINGS BY WILLIAM HYDE.

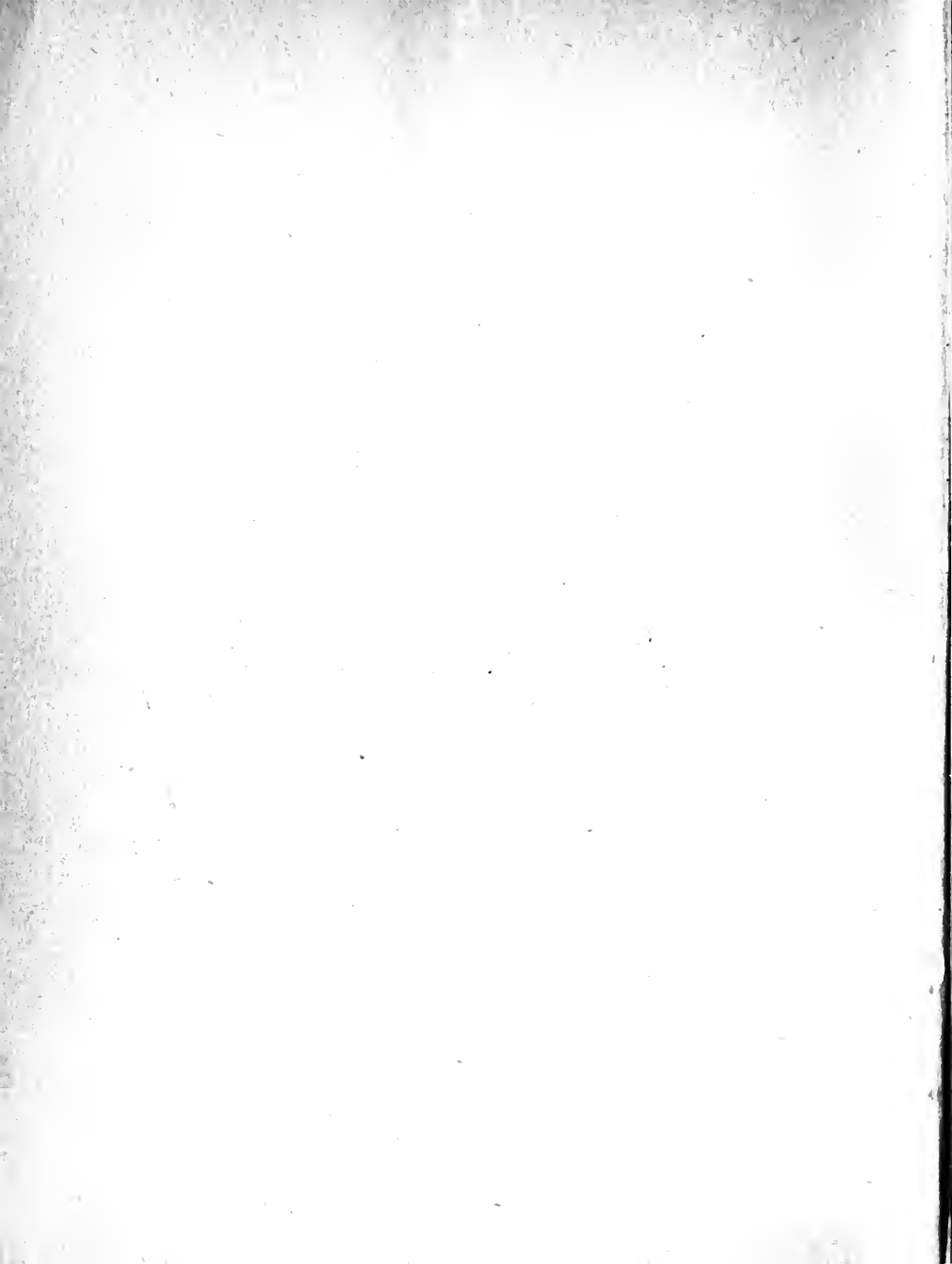






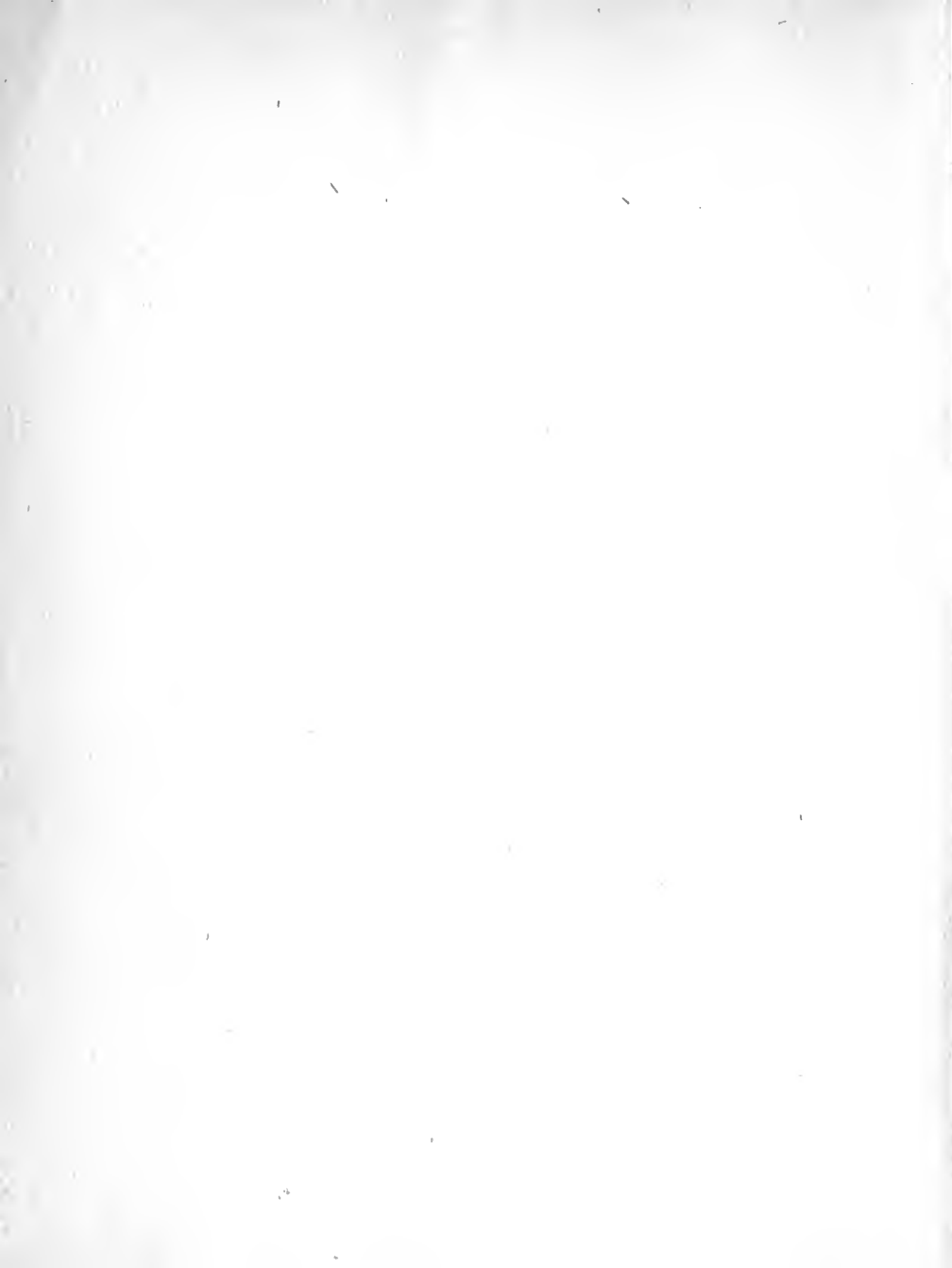
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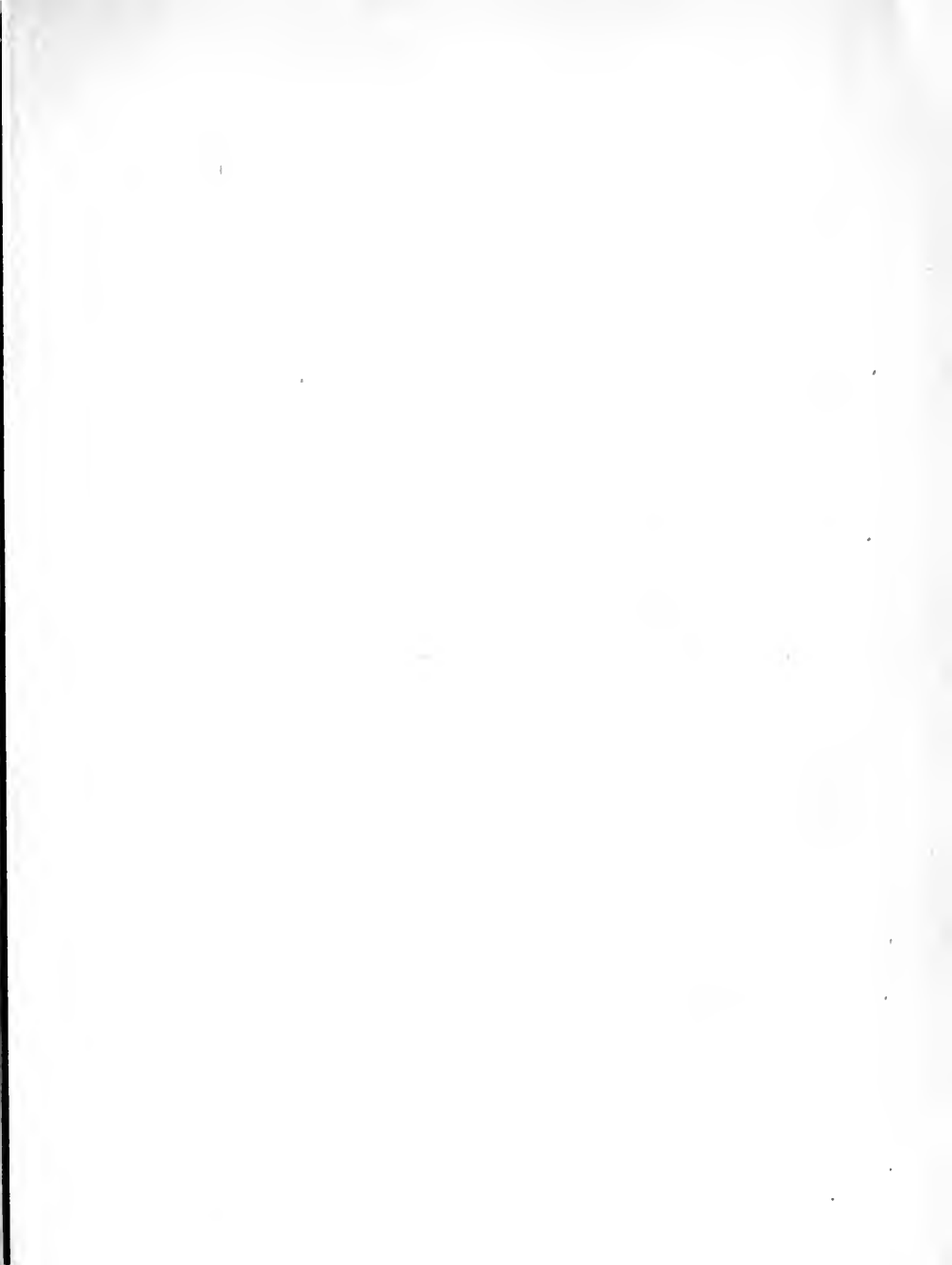
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AN IMAGED WORLD









AN IMAGED WORLD

POEMS IN PROSE

BY EDWARD GARNETT

WITH FIVE DRAWINGS

BY WILLIAM HYDE



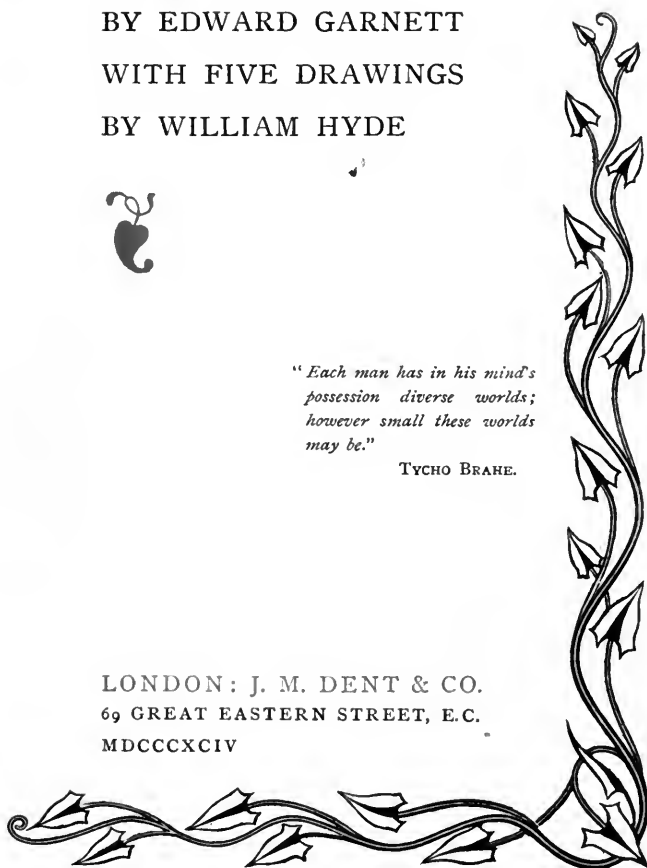
*"Each man has in his mind's
possession diverse worlds;
however small these worlds
may be."*

TYCHO BRAHE.

LONDON: J. M. DENT & CO.

69 GREAT EASTERN STREET, E.C.

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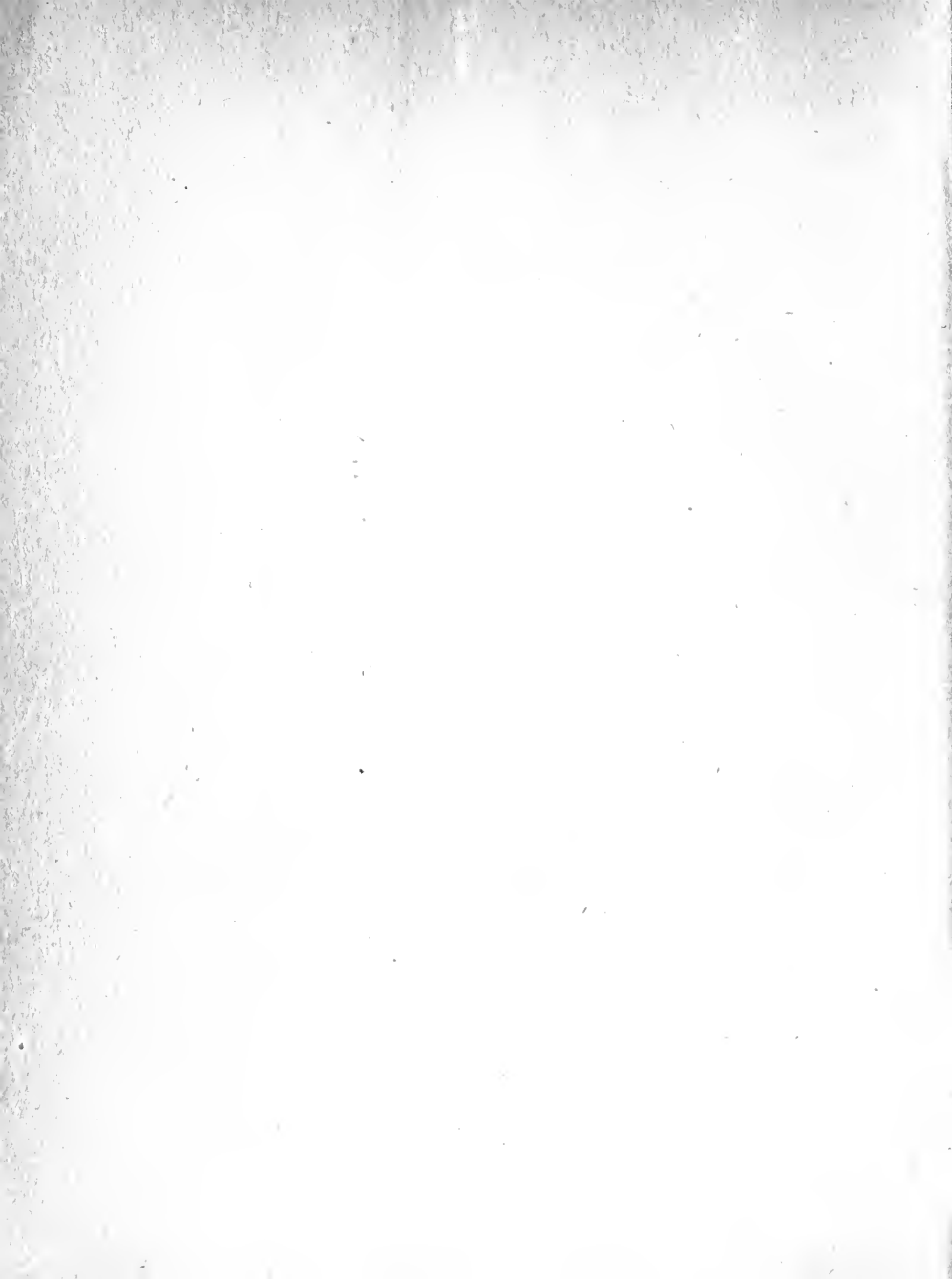
TO

OLIVIA NARNEY

WHO LOVES

THE OPEN AIR





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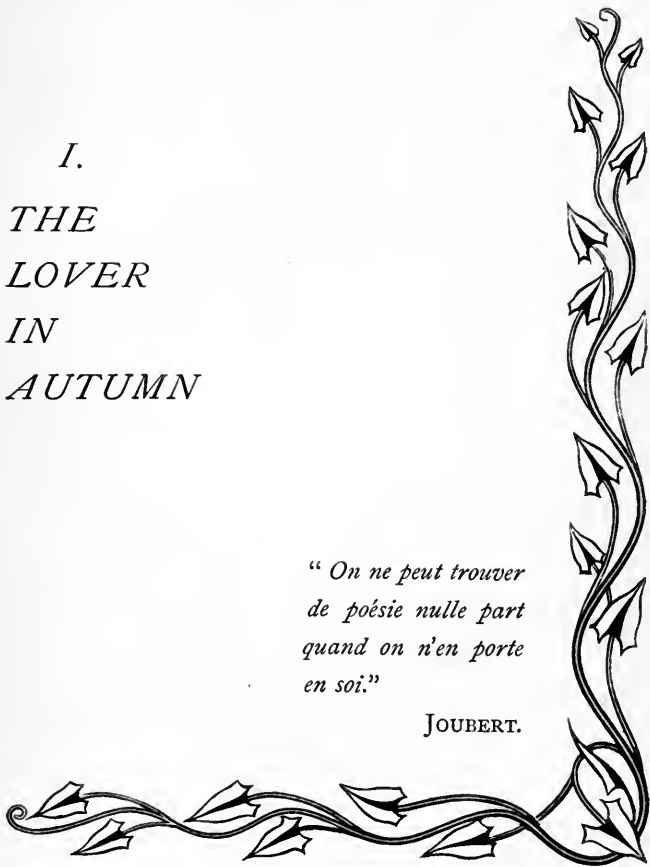
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I.
THE
LOVER
IN
AUTUMN

*"On ne peut trouver
de poésie nulle part
quand on n'en porte
en soi."*

JOUBERT.





Moorland Clouds

SOLITUDE CALLS TO THE MAN



IN the crooked hilly village all doors are shut on the wet street. Boisterous laughter and hubbub of jolly voices come from the tap-room as you pass the inn. "What a God-forsaken day!" I heard one loud voice saying, "What a God-forsaken day!"

Past drenched barley fields and dripping orchards runs the road to the great downs, undulating upwards from curved grassy slopes. Struggling on against the wind and rain you leave far far beneath dull village street, straight road and sodden home fields, gaining the crest of the moorland hills.

Here on the plateau are sweeping grey cloud-seas, white rain-gusts, and the embraces of naked sky and naked earth. Here amid these hills is solitude. Few sounds are heard on the great moor, only the slow bleat of sheep, the cry of the curlew lapping over the black bogs, and the lark

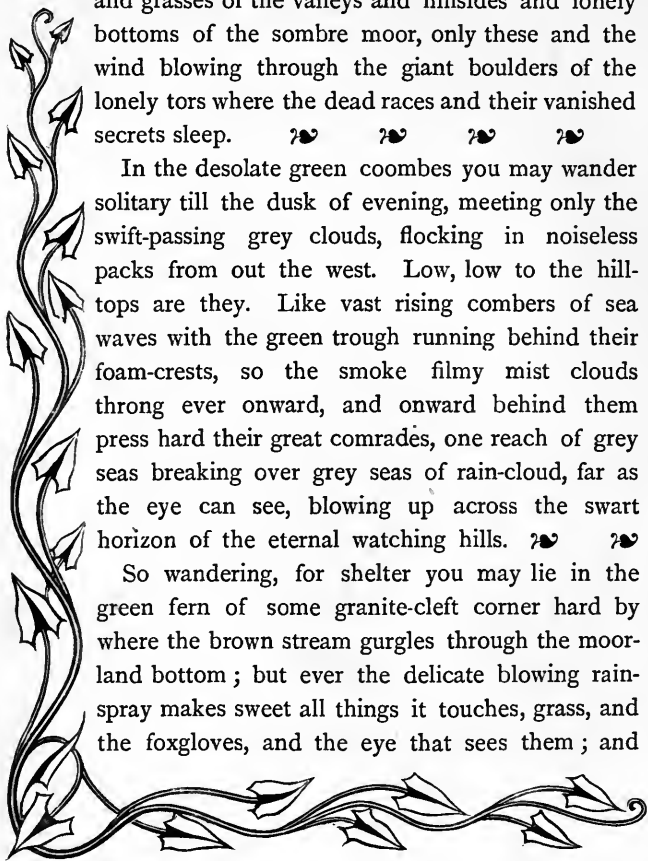


Solitude
calls
to the
Man

fluttering in the grey cloud-driving sky, trilling his dew-distilled song. Only these and the sound of the great wind filling the rushes and heather and grasses of the valleys and hillsides and lonely bottoms of the sombre moor, only these and the wind blowing through the giant boulders of the lonely tors where the dead races and their vanished secrets sleep. ? ? ? ?

In the desolate green coombes you may wander solitary till the dusk of evening, meeting only the swift-passing grey clouds, flocking in noiseless packs from out the west. Low, low to the hill-tops are they. Like vast rising combers of sea waves with the green trough running behind their foam-crests, so the smoke filmy mist clouds throng ever onward, and onward behind them press hard their great comrades, one reach of grey seas breaking over grey seas of rain-cloud, far as the eye can see, blowing up across the swart horizon of the eternal watching hills. ? ?

So wandering, for shelter you may lie in the green fern of some granite-cleft corner hard by where the brown stream gurgles through the moorland bottom ; but ever the delicate blowing rain-spray makes sweet all things it touches, grass, and the foxgloves, and the eye that sees them ; and

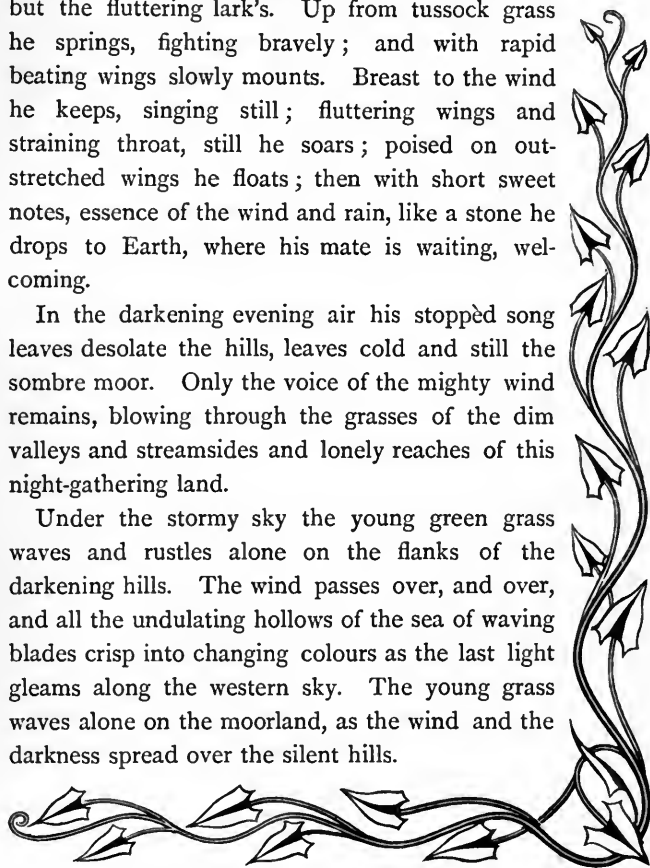


the wet fresh wind caresses the face's flesh with loving touch. Grass and wind and rainy sky ripple and blend and flow, and no song you hear but the fluttering lark's. Up from tussock grass he springs, fighting bravely; and with rapid beating wings slowly mounts. Breast to the wind he keeps, singing still; fluttering wings and straining throat, still he soars; poised on outstretched wings he floats; then with short sweet notes, essence of the wind and rain, like a stone he drops to Earth, where his mate is waiting, welcoming.

In the darkening evening air his stoppèd song leaves desolate the hills, leaves cold and still the sombre moor. Only the voice of the mighty wind remains, blowing through the grasses of the dim valleys and streamsides and lonely reaches of this night-gathering land.

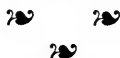
Under the stormy sky the young green grass waves and rustles alone on the flanks of the darkening hills. The wind passes over, and over, and all the undulating hollows of the sea of waving blades crisp into changing colours as the last light gleams along the western sky. The young grass waves alone on the moorland, as the wind and the darkness spread over the silent hills.

Solitude
calls
to the
Pan



Lovers' Dreams in Pitiless Night

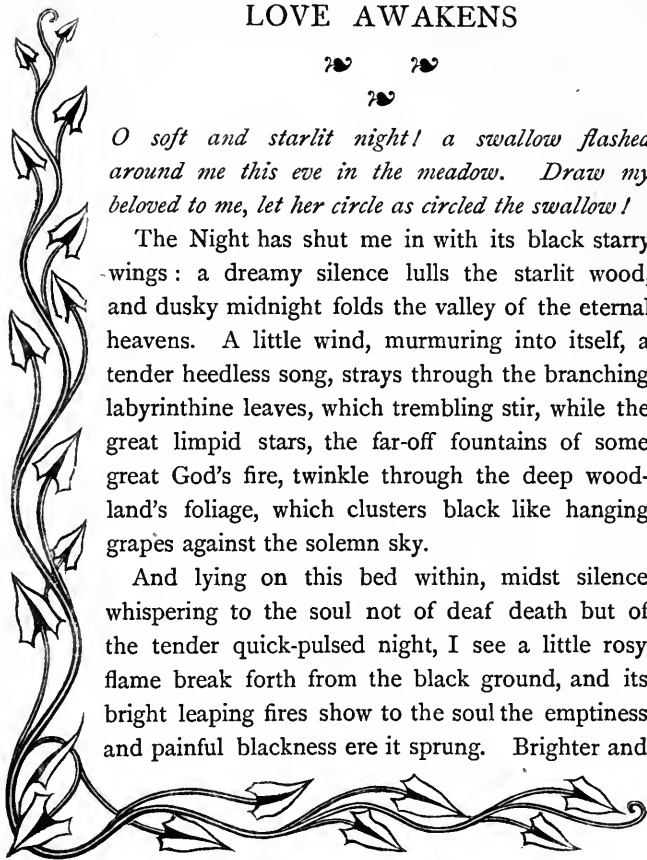
LOVE AWAKENS



O soft and starlit night! a swallow flashed around me this eve in the meadow. Draw my beloved to me, let her circle as circled the swallow!

The Night has shut me in with its black starry wings: a dreamy silence lulls the starlit wood, and dusky midnight folds the valley of the eternal heavens. A little wind, murmuring into itself, a tender heedless song, strays through the branching labyrinthine leaves, which trembling stir, while the great limpid stars, the far-off fountains of some great God's fire, twinkle through the deep woodland's foliage, which clusters black like hanging grapes against the solemn sky.

And lying on this bed within, midst silence whispering to the soul not of deaf death but of the tender quick-pulsed night, I see a little rosy flame break forth from the black ground, and its bright leaping fires show to the soul the emptiness and painful blackness ere it sprung. Brighter and



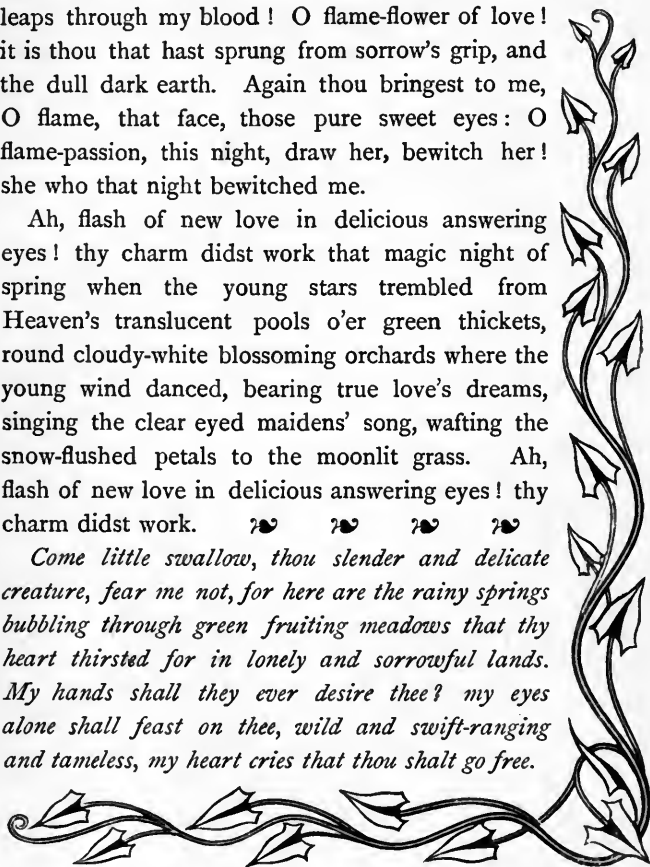
brighter gleam the glassy fires until they glow, a
 living core of crystal flame, in the night's black heart.

Love
 Awakens

The flame leaps up towards the night, the flame
 leaps through my blood ! O flame-flower of love !
 it is thou that hast sprung from sorrow's grip, and
 the dull dark earth. Again thou bringest to me,
 O flame, that face, those pure sweet eyes : O
 flame-passion, this night, draw her, bewitch her !
 she who that night bewitched me.

Ah, flash of new love in delicious answering
 eyes ! thy charm didst work that magic night of
 spring when the young stars trembled from
 Heaven's translucent pools o'er green thickets,
 round cloudy-white blossoming orchards where the
 young wind danced, bearing true love's dreams,
 singing the clear eyed maidens' song, wafting the
 snow-flushed petals to the moonlit grass. Ah,
 flash of new love in delicious answering eyes ! thy
 charm didst work. ? ? ? ?

*Come little swallow, thou slender and delicate
 creature, fear me not, for here are the rainy springs
 bubbling through green fruiting meadows that thy
 heart thirsted for in lonely and sorrowful lands.
 My hands shall they ever desire thee ? my eyes
 alone shall feast on thee, wild and swift-ranging
 and tameless, my heart cries that thou shalt go free.*



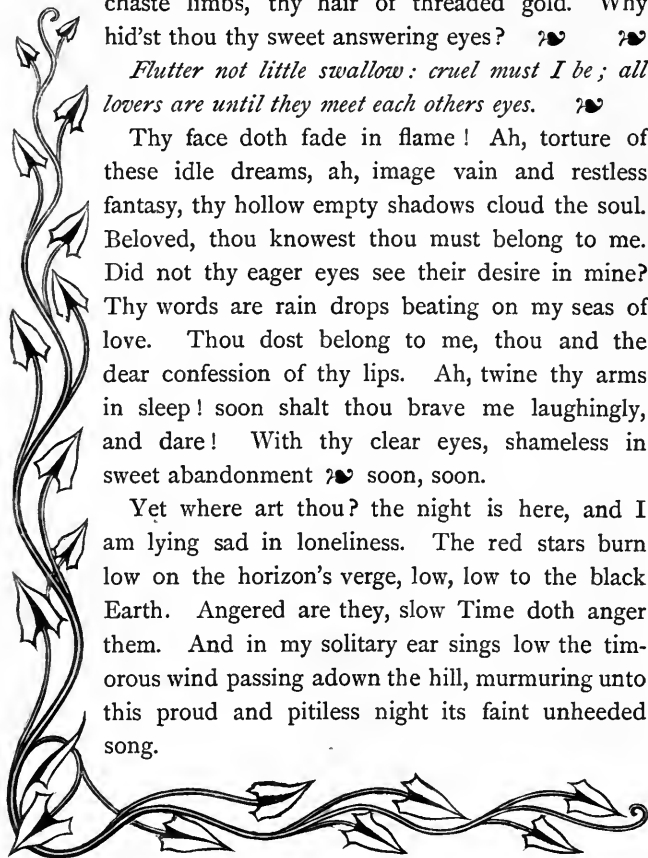
Love
Awakens

The fire leaps, the fire burns ! the blood-flame
rushes through my heart, as by the dancing light
I see thy face of pure and eager grace, thy delicate
chaste limbs, thy hair of threaded gold. Why
hid'st thou thy sweet answering eyes? ♡ ♡

*Flutter not little swallow : cruel must I be ; all
lovers are until they meet each others eyes. ♡*

Thy face doth fade in flame ! Ah, torture of
these idle dreams, ah, image vain and restless
fantasy, thy hollow empty shadows cloud the soul.
Beloved, thou knowest thou must belong to me.
Did not thy eager eyes see their desire in mine?
Thy words are rain drops beating on my seas of
love. Thou dost belong to me, thou and the
dear confession of thy lips. Ah, twine thy arms
in sleep ! soon shalt thou brave me laughingly,
and dare ! With thy clear eyes, shameless in
sweet abandonment ♡ soon, soon.

Yet where art thou ? the night is here, and I
am lying sad in loneliness. The red stars burn
low on the horizon's verge, low, low to the black
Earth. Angered are they, slow Time doth anger
them. And in my solitary ear sings low the tim-
orous wind passing adown the hill, murmuring unto
this proud and pitiless night its faint unheeded
song.



Love Secrets and Earth Secrets

THE LOVER CONFIDES IN EARTH



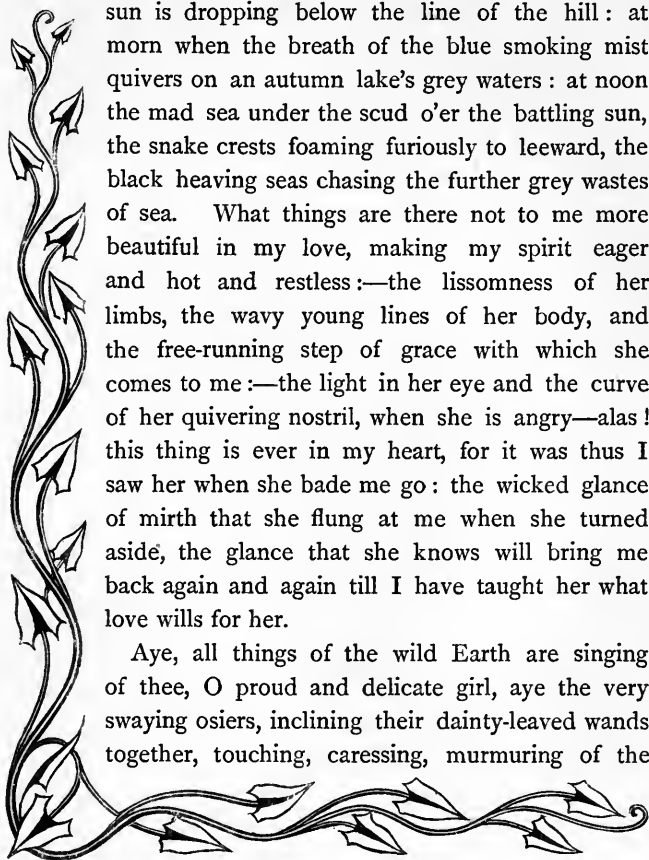
SECRETS, aye the masterful winds and wantoning waters and shy hiding woodlands have passion's desire and its secrets, and my eyes, thirsting with unslaked love for the light of thy eyes, O white-throated girl, see in the marriage of Heaven and Earth, and night with the day, myriads of passionate tokens. The running swathes of grey cloud wreathing, unwreathing, making the day's harvest of the sky, the powerful Sun in his white glowing heat emerging from the amorous-lipped clouds that ever surround and enfold him, what do they tell me of the sweetness of my love's white body? what tells the grey and pearly dew? and gleaming raindrops that shake within them worlds of light and rainbow wonders? The wind that possesses the confident earth his mistress each night and morn, that comes as he listeth, and leaveth her for a passing space, what does he tell to me of my grey-eyed girl?



The
Lover
confides
in Earth

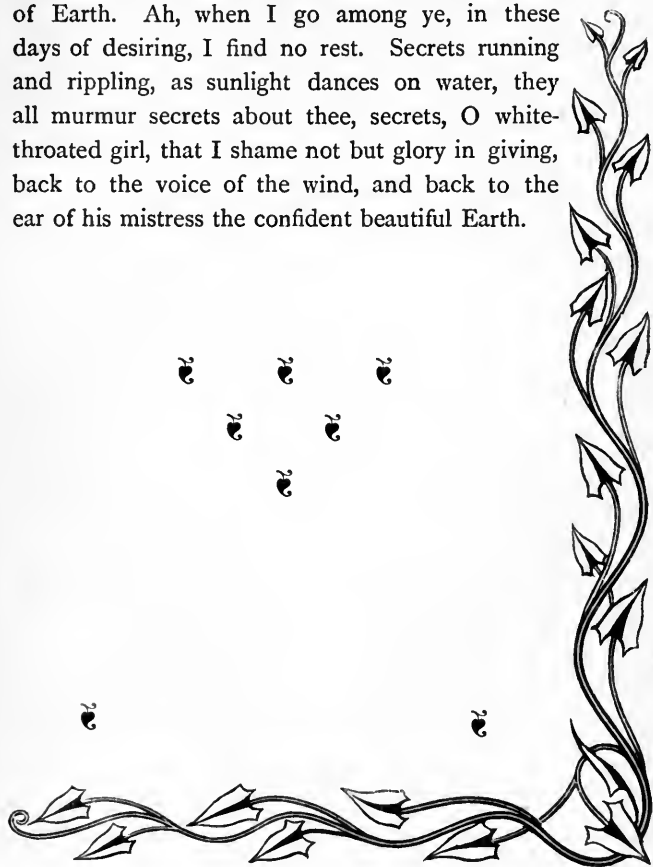
What things are there to me on earth of a beauty beyond much beauty :—at eve the grey bloom of the deep heather slanting up, when the sun is dropping below the line of the hill : at morn when the breath of the blue smoking mist quivers on an autumn lake's grey waters : at noon the mad sea under the scud o'er the battling sun, the snake crests foaming furiously to leeward, the black heaving seas chasing the further grey wastes of sea. What things are there not to me more beautiful in my love, making my spirit eager and hot and restless :—the lissomness of her limbs, the wavy young lines of her body, and the free-running step of grace with which she comes to me :—the light in her eye and the curve of her quivering nostril, when she is angry—alas ! this thing is ever in my heart, for it was thus I saw her when she bade me go : the wicked glance of mirth that she flung at me when she turned aside, the glance that she knows will bring me back again and again till I have taught her what love wills for her.

Aye, all things of the wild Earth are singing of thee, O proud and delicate girl, aye the very swaying osiers, inclining their dainty-leaved wands together, touching, caressing, murmuring of the

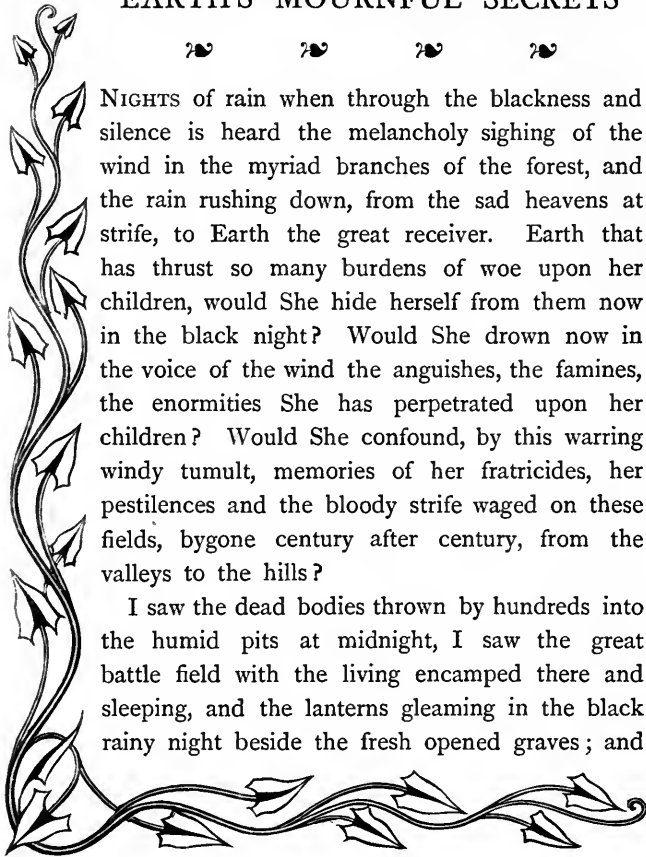


wind's embrace. Aye, ye have made her, she is made of your essence, O purest rain and wind blossoms I love, and the odours and fragrance of Earth. Ah, when I go among ye, in these days of desiring, I find no rest. Secrets running and rippling, as sunlight dances on water, they all murmur secrets about thee, secrets, O white-throated girl, that I shame not but glory in giving, back to the voice of the wind, and back to the ear of his mistress the confident beautiful Earth.

The
Lover
confides
in Earth



EARTH'S MOURNFUL SECRETS



NIGHTS of rain when through the blackness and silence is heard the melancholy sighing of the wind in the myriad branches of the forest, and the rain rushing down, from the sad heavens at strife, to Earth the great receiver. Earth that has thrust so many burdens of woe upon her children, would She hide herself from them now in the black night? Would She drown now in the voice of the wind the anguishes, the famines, the enormities She has perpetrated upon her children? Would She confound, by this warring windy tumult, memories of her fratricides, her pestilences and the bloody strife waged on these fields, bygone century after century, from the valleys to the hills?

I saw the dead bodies thrown by hundreds into the humid pits at midnight, I saw the great battle field with the living encamped there and sleeping, and the lanterns gleaming in the black rainy night beside the fresh opened graves; and

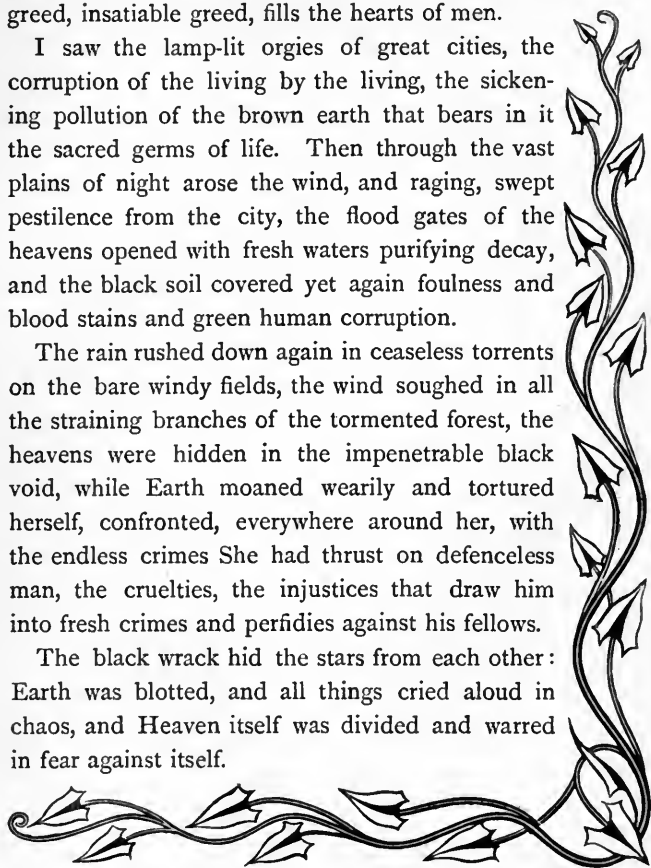
I heard Earth crying in the windy night that her children had slain her children, and desecrated her the all-mother, and I heard her bewailing that greed, insatiable greed, fills the hearts of men.

Earth's
Mournful
Secrets

I saw the lamp-lit orgies of great cities, the corruption of the living by the living, the sickening pollution of the brown earth that bears in it the sacred germs of life. Then through the vast plains of night arose the wind, and raging, swept pestilence from the city, the flood gates of the heavens opened with fresh waters purifying decay, and the black soil covered yet again foulness and blood stains and green human corruption.

The rain rushed down again in ceaseless torrents on the bare windy fields, the wind soughed in all the straining branches of the tormented forest, the heavens were hidden in the impenetrable black void, while Earth moaned wearily and tortured herself, confronted, everywhere around her, with the endless crimes She had thrust on defenceless man, the cruelties, the injustices that draw him into fresh crimes and perfidies against his fellows.

The black wrack hid the stars from each other: Earth was blotted, and all things cried aloud in chaos, and Heaven itself was divided and warred in fear against itself.



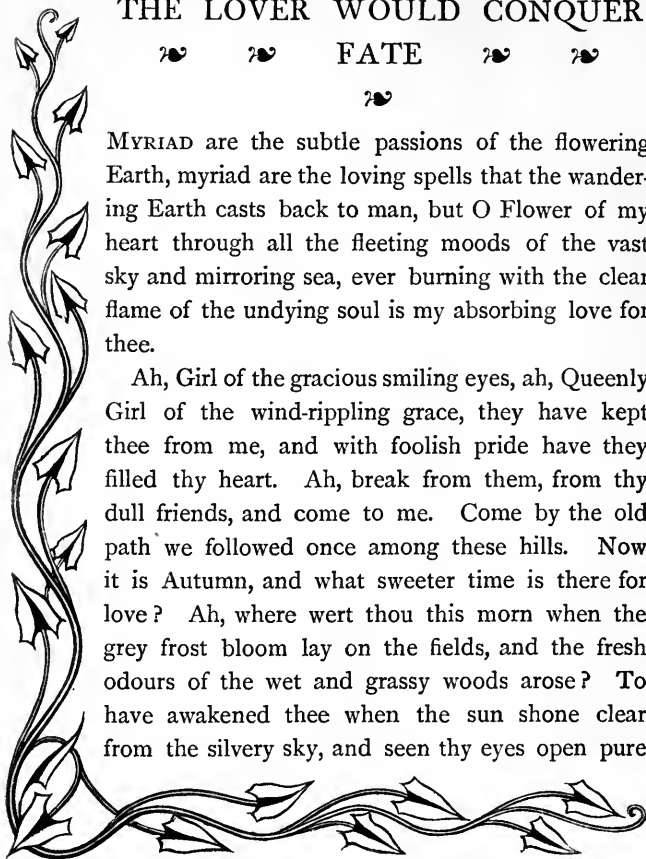
THE LOVER WOULD CONQUER

~ ~ FATE ~ ~

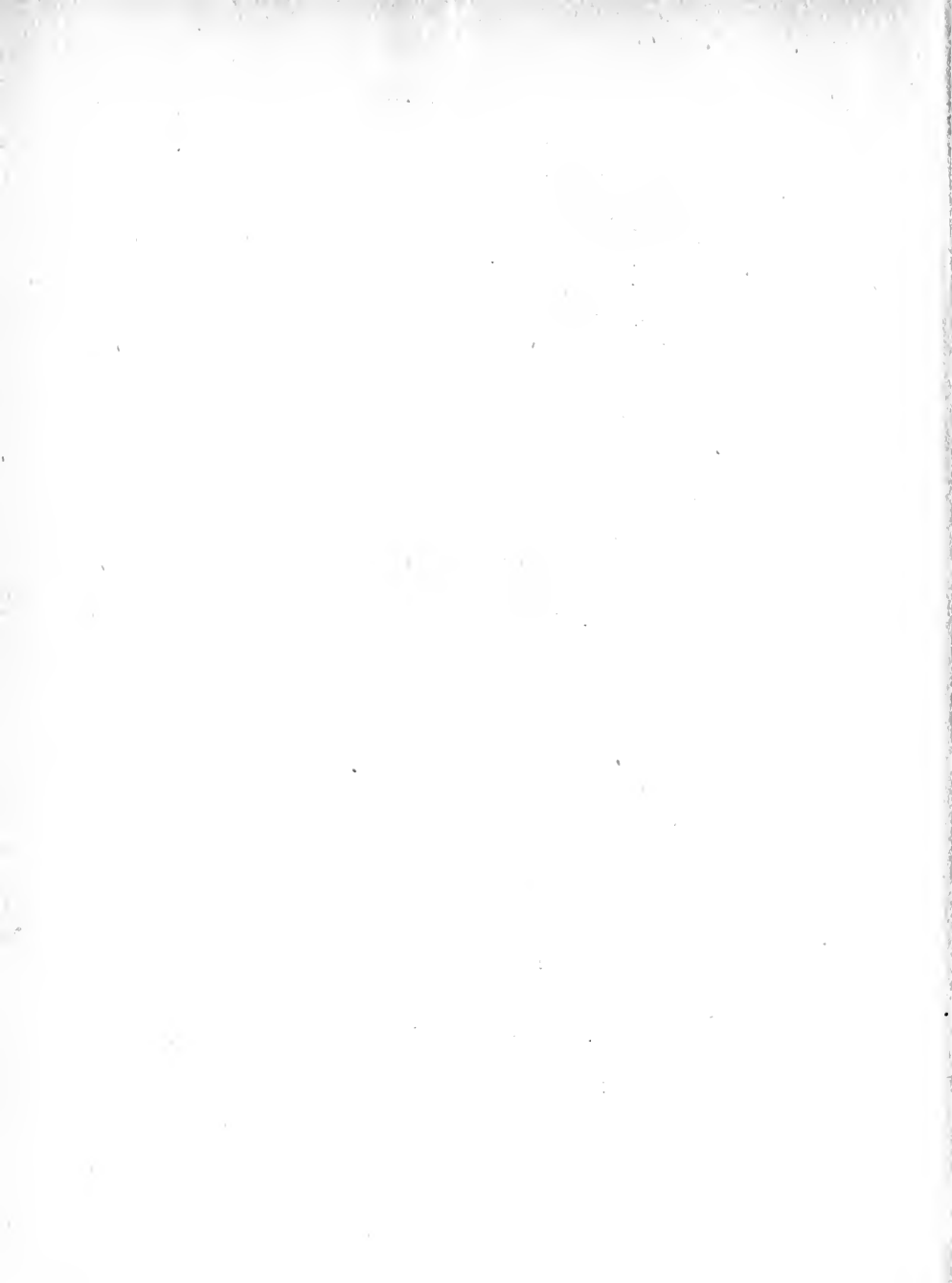
~ ~

MYRIAD are the subtle passions of the flowering Earth, myriad are the loving spells that the wandering Earth casts back to man, but O Flower of my heart through all the fleeting moods of the vast sky and mirroring sea, ever burning with the clear flame of the undying soul is my absorbing love for thee.

Ah, Girl of the gracious smiling eyes, ah, Queenly Girl of the wind-rippling grace, they have kept thee from me, and with foolish pride have they filled thy heart. Ah, break from them, from thy dull friends, and come to me. Come by the old path we followed once among these hills. Now it is Autumn, and what sweeter time is there for love? Ah, where wert thou this morn when the grey frost bloom lay on the fields, and the fresh odours of the wet and grassy woods arose? To have awakened thee when the sun shone clear from the silvery sky, and seen thy eyes open pure







and mischievous as water wantoning in the grey
rills of the running brook ! But, ah, they have
turned thy footsteps from following me.

The
Lover
would
conquer
fate

Flower of my heart, would thou wert here on
the hillside this dark eve of grey and windy
autumn, and the dim greyish heavens and fleeing
clouds were over our two heads. O Girl, the
sad wind is rising, O Girl, this night that is falling
will bring desolation into the heart of the world.
I would thou wert by my fireside this night :
ah, Girl-flower thy pure white curved throat and
hidden round breasts are blossoms I would pluck
from the chaos of this mad world.

I would be with thee this night, all the past and
the present of Earth would I give to be lying with
thee in the dead of this night : then thee and the
future would I hold safe in my firm hand. O Girl
of the gracious mien, when thou hadst tasted of the
honey of my love, before morn the memory of thy
friends would have paled in thy laughing heart.
Ah, kind God, only give her to me, and I will
work my miracles myself.—

The grey black night is falling falling, the
hoary all-foreseeing trees are shaking ominously

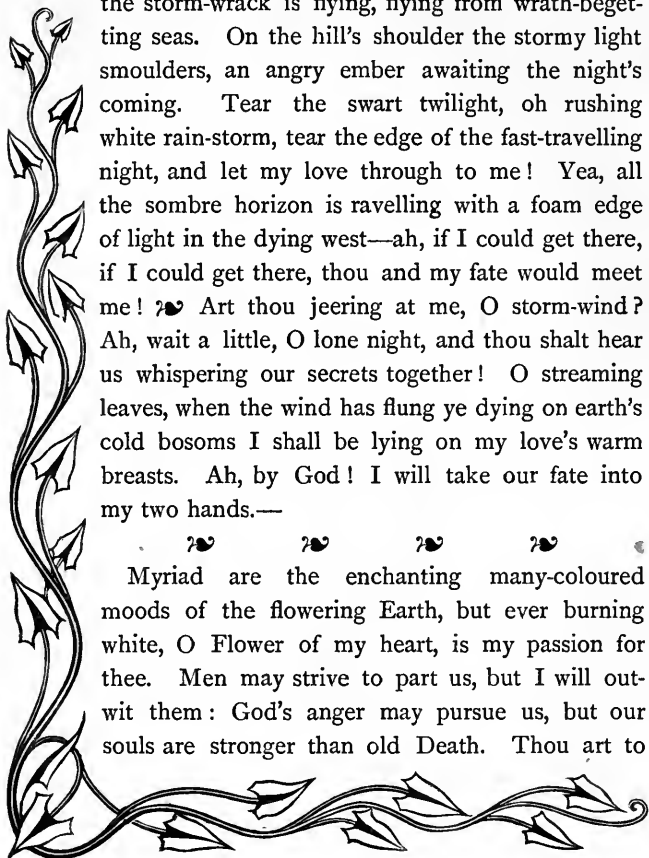


The
Lover
would
conquer
Fate

their arms under the drifting roar of the windy sky. The wind is rising this night, the wind is rising, the leaves are streaming, streaming across the hillside, the storm-wrack is flying, flying from wrath-begetting seas. On the hill's shoulder the stormy light smoulders, an angry ember awaiting the night's coming. Tear the swart twilight, oh rushing white rain-storm, tear the edge of the fast-travelling night, and let my love through to me! Yea, all the sombre horizon is ravelling with a foam edge of light in the dying west—ah, if I could get there, if I could get there, thou and my fate would meet me! ♪ Art thou jeering at me, O storm-wind? Ah, wait a little, O lone night, and thou shalt hear us whispering our secrets together! O streaming leaves, when the wind has flung ye dying on earth's cold bosoms I shall be lying on my love's warm breasts. Ah, by God! I will take our fate into my two hands.—



Myriad are the enchanting many-coloured moods of the flowering Earth, but ever burning white, O Flower of my heart, is my passion for thee. Men may strive to part us, but I will outwit them: God's anger may pursue us, but our souls are stronger than old Death. Thou art to



me as Hesperus the evening star, the fixed star of love, before men burning, clear in the translucent rosy eve. Yea, yonder too will I be with thee, out there in the limitless oceans of Eternity, where the pure stars roll over the eternal glassy seas. Ah, Flower of my heart, will not our love outlast these changing stars? I swear I will not be torn from thee when thy sweet eyes rest upon me at the gate of Death. I will leave my life and demand thee before the burning throne of the calm Gods.


Yea, yonder I will be with thee in Eternity, where the passionate burning stars roll over Love's eternal seas.

The
Lover
would
conquer
fate



Earth's Beauty awaits Her Sons

EARTH SEEKS TO CONSOLE HIM




WHEN that life dawns, oh happiness then to be born of men! Oh happy, happy to be born of earth! earth with her woody mountain sides and silent valley glades.



At sunset I wandered to the hillside, the sun died in purple lustres, and the young cowslip Moon rose high in the heavens. In the pale blue of the evening sky she stood, in a pure white arch of clouds, clouds wreathed and slight. And, as the sun's light died, there failed too the sweet song of the forest birds, slowly their sweet notes died, and all the dark wood hushed as gentle Night came wandering over the plains of the world. Oh, happiness awaits the sons of men when they shall turn towards beauty. Oh happy then, thrice happy to be born of earth.



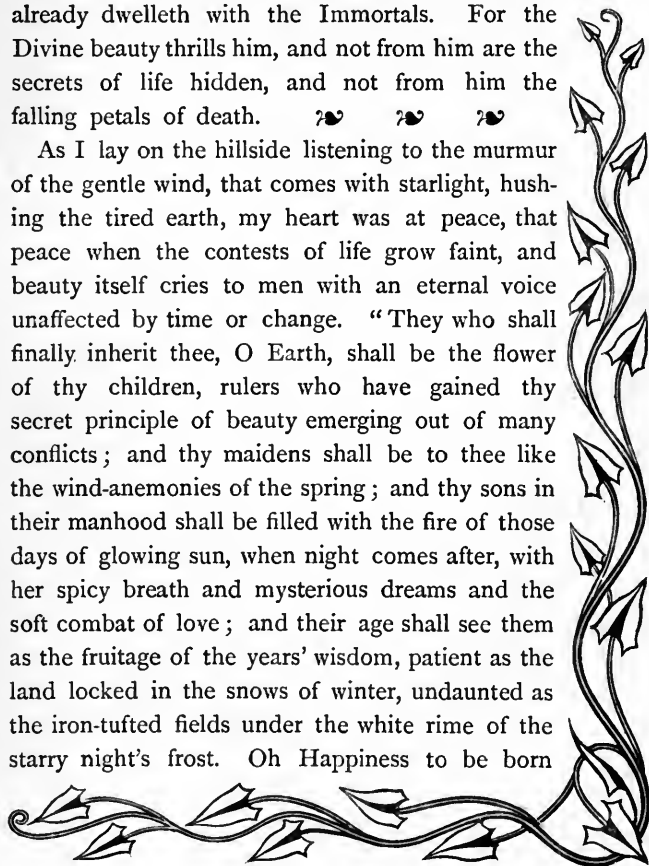
For he who sees the Lady moon, the stars in their eternal youth, and the great sun whose warmth brings fragrance from the herbs and



grasses, towards whose dazzling strength the pale bulbs spring with white and purple flowers, O, he who delighteth in the simple things of earth already dwelleth with the Immortals. For the Divine beauty thrills him, and not from him are the secrets of life hidden, and not from him the falling petals of death. ? ? ?

Earth
seeks to
console
Him

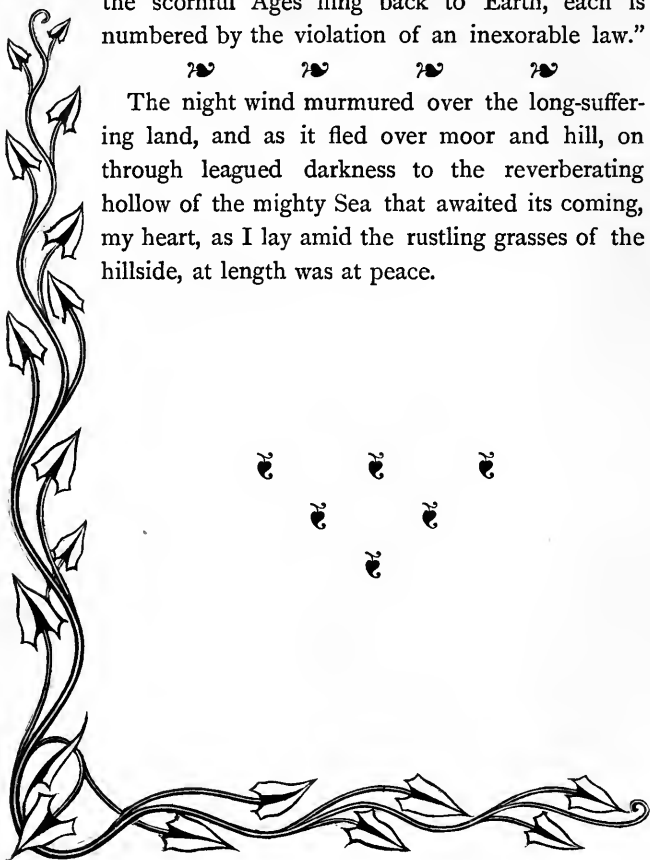
As I lay on the hillside listening to the murmur of the gentle wind, that comes with starlight, hushing the tired earth, my heart was at peace, that peace when the contests of life grow faint, and beauty itself cries to men with an eternal voice unaffected by time or change. "They who shall finally inherit thee, O Earth, shall be the flower of thy children, rulers who have gained thy secret principle of beauty emerging out of many conflicts; and thy maidens shall be to thee like the wind-anemonies of the spring; and thy sons in their manhood shall be filled with the fire of those days of glowing sun, when night comes after, with her spicy breath and mysterious dreams and the soft combat of love; and their age shall see them as the fruitage of the years' wisdom, patient as the land locked in the snows of winter, undaunted as the iron-tufted fields under the white rime of the starry night's frost. Oh Happiness to be born



Earth seeks to console Him of Earth, when man has mastered the mighty mind of Nature, that he war no longer unceasing with her laws. For of the myriad victims that the scornful Ages fling back to Earth, each is numbered by the violation of an inexorable law."



The night wind murmured over the long-suffering land, and as it fled over moor and hill, on through leagued darkness to the reverberating hollow of the mighty Sea that awaited its coming, my heart, as I lay amid the rustling grasses of the hillside, at length was at peace.





Winds over Night Woods

THE WIND AWAKES FRESH LOVE



ALL night the winds swept over the deep-sighing woods, all night I lay in a strange broken sleep desiring thee. Desiring thee, O Girl with face half-roguish half-demure, thy sweet low laugh, and eyes ever inviting, all denying me. Thus, so it seemed, as these great winds of darkness filled the air my desires rose, rose high and overwhelmed me,—leaving me faint and listening wearily to the sighing woods.

They came, like waves, the winds, like waves they fled, and all their kindred followed leaping, roaring, fleeing, in great resistless might, like the green watery walls of mountainous seas, for ever climbing up the gulf to fall, to foam, on, on.—Afar I heard the cadence of their coming, swelling in rising majesty, till in one unison of deep unburdening strength, and vast full-throated ecstacy, the wide Earth was the wind's, the wind's, the wind possessed
  and then a slow and dying lull.

But in that lull there was the hidden ache, the longing after, stinging the quick of love, and

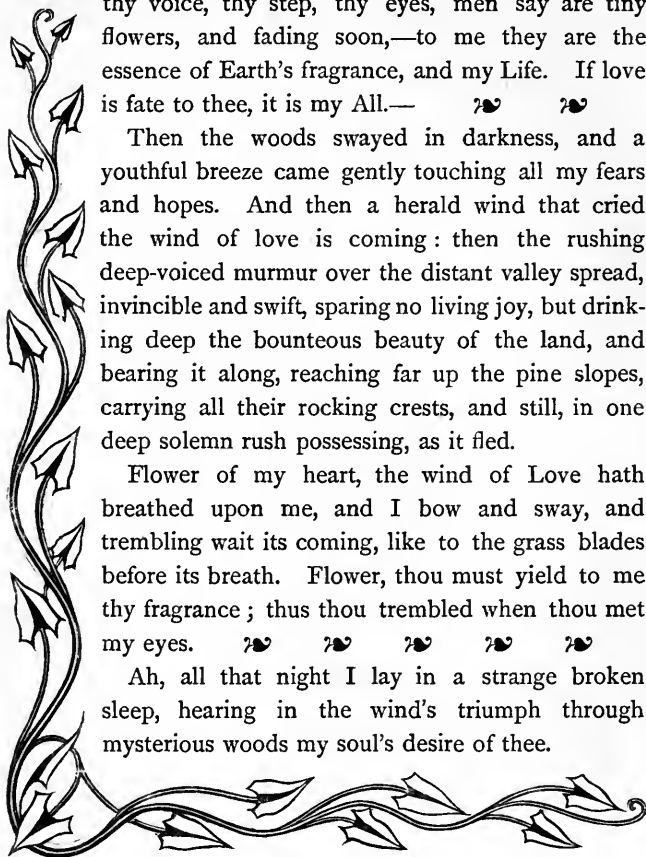


The Wind awakes fresh Love waking the fresh agony of desire, deep-buried struggling up,—and all the black night seemed to glide into one thought—O Flower of Love, thy voice, thy step, thy eyes, men say are tiny flowers, and fading soon,—to me they are the essence of Earth's fragrance, and my Life. If love is fate to thee, it is my All.— ? ?

Then the woods swayed in darkness, and a youthful breeze came gently touching all my fears and hopes. And then a herald wind that cried the wind of love is coming: then the rushing deep-voiced murmur over the distant valley spread, invincible and swift, sparing no living joy, but drinking deep the bounteous beauty of the land, and bearing it along, reaching far up the pine slopes, carrying all their rocking crests, and still, in one deep solemn rush possessing, as it fled.

Flower of my heart, the wind of Love hath breathed upon me, and I bow and sway, and trembling wait its coming, like to the grass blades before its breath. Flower, thou must yield to me thy fragrance; thus thou trembled when thou met my eyes. ? ? ? ? ?

Ah, all that night I lay in a strange broken sleep, hearing in the wind's triumph through mysterious woods my soul's desire of thee.



Hot Sun on the Great Plain

THE SUN APPEASES THE LOVER



THE wooded noble hill commands bold views of the vast weald where three green counties join. There you may go, and lying on the heights watch idly in the vale the sunlight glorifying realms of land, while distant hamlets lie obscure in shadows of the flying clouds.

To lie amid the bracken, on the south side of this great hill, while the wind murmurs in the tops of the red beechwoods, swaying round you, above you, below you ; to know that your eyes, opening, will drink in the grey silver heavens and the sun, and the great plain rolling east and west ; to hear the faint cries of the ploughmen to their horses in the valley fields, and the lowing of distant cattle drifting up to you on the wind ; this, this is a return to joy in Earth.

Stretch your limbs and give yourself up to the enjoyment of the sun's hot rays, to the flesh-bathing mellowing autumn heat, and dreamily

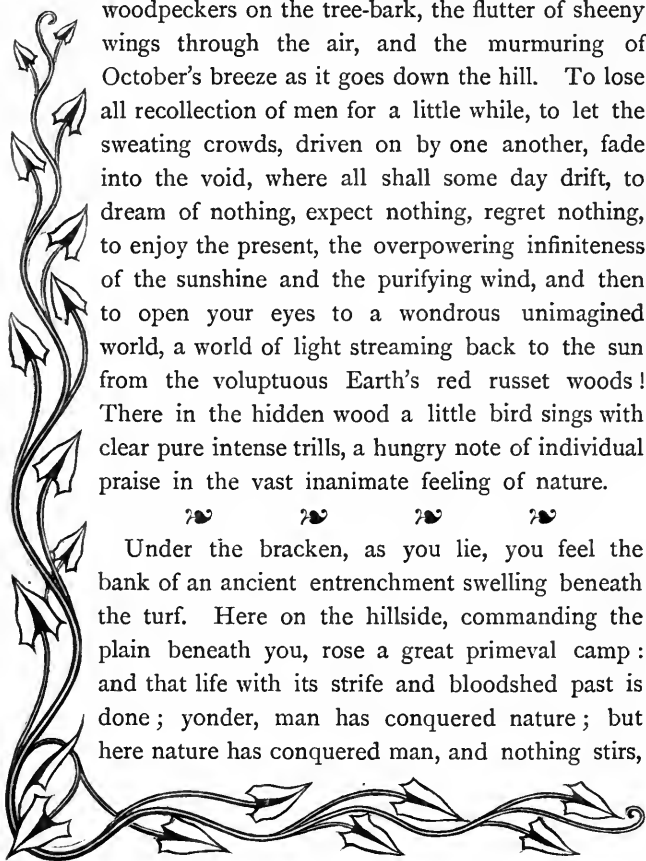


The Sun
appears
the Lover

watch the red blood of your eyelids swimming a gorgeous transparent sanguine sea against the light, hearing, half sleeping, the tap tap of the woodpeckers on the tree-bark, the flutter of sheeny wings through the air, and the murmuring of October's breeze as it goes down the hill. To lose all recollection of men for a little while, to let the sweating crowds, driven on by one another, fade into the void, where all shall some day drift, to dream of nothing, expect nothing, regret nothing, to enjoy the present, the overpowering infiniteness of the sunshine and the purifying wind, and then to open your eyes to a wondrous unimagined world, a world of light streaming back to the sun from the voluptuous Earth's red russet woods! There in the hidden wood a little bird sings with clear pure intense trills, a hungry note of individual praise in the vast inanimate feeling of nature.



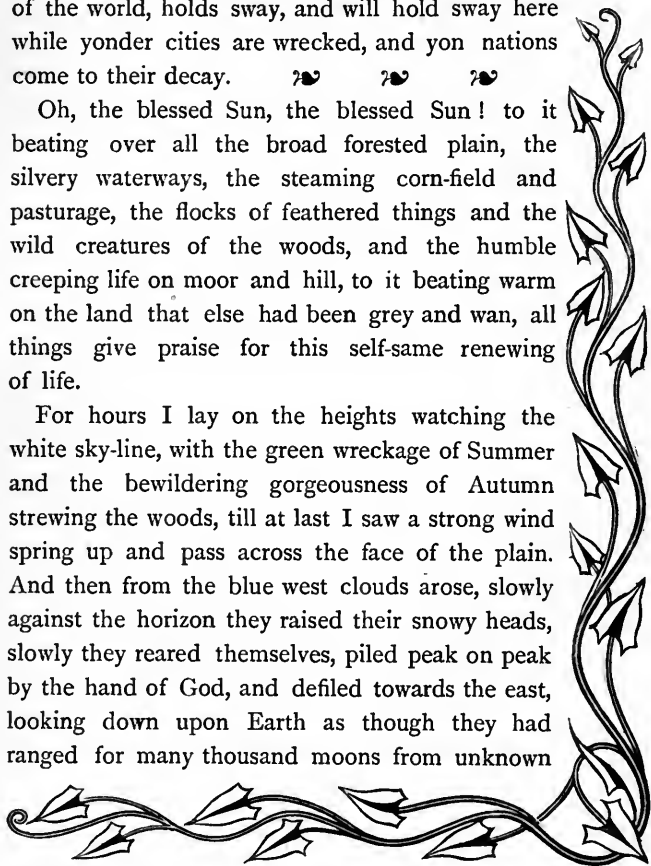
Under the bracken, as you lie, you feel the bank of an ancient entrenchment swelling beneath the turf. Here on the hillside, commanding the plain beneath you, rose a great primeval camp: and that life with its strife and bloodshed past is done; yonder, man has conquered nature; but here nature has conquered man, and nothing stirs,



while the quiet sunshine pours on in mellow floods, **The Sun**
 enkindling dried flowering grasses, and the litter of **appeases**
 red leaves. A solemn peace, far from the alarums **the Lover**
 of the world, holds sway, and will hold sway here
 while yonder cities are wrecked, and yon nations
 come to their decay. ? ? ?

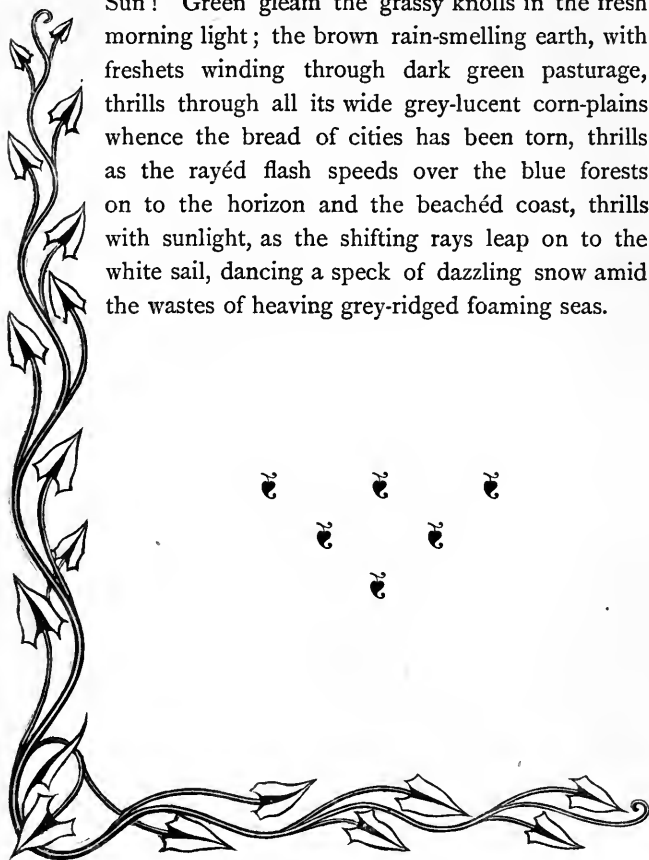
Oh, the blessed Sun, the blessed Sun! to it
 beating over all the broad forested plain, the
 silvery waterways, the steaming corn-field and
 pasturage, the flocks of feathered things and the
 wild creatures of the woods, and the humble
 creeping life on moor and hill, to it beating warm
 on the land that else had been grey and wan, all
 things give praise for this self-same renewing
 of life.

For hours I lay on the heights watching the
 white sky-line, with the green wreckage of Summer
 and the bewildering gorgeousness of Autumn
 strewing the woods, till at last I saw a strong wind
 spring up and pass across the face of the plain.
 And then from the blue west clouds arose, slowly
 against the horizon they raised their snowy heads,
 slowly they reared themselves, piled peak on peak
 by the hand of God, and defiled towards the east,
 looking down upon Earth as though they had
 ranged for many thousand moons from unknown



The Sun
appears
the Loner

worlds to unknown worlds, and never yet had seen an Earth so fair. But still they touched not the great sun. Oh, the blessed Sun, the blessed Sun! Green gleam the grassy knolls in the fresh morning light; the brown rain-smelling earth, with freshets winding through dark green pasturage, thrills through all its wide grey-lucent corn-plains whence the bread of cities has been torn, thrills as the rayéd flash speeds over the blue forests on to the horizon and the beachéd coast, thrills with sunlight, as the shifting rays leap on to the white sail, dancing a speck of dazzling snow amid the wastes of heaving grey-ridged foaming seas.



A Little Pathway in the Woods

THE LOVER BESEECHES HIS MISTRESS

O HYLD, down there in the woods my feet have
bruised a tiny path amid the autumn grass, as I
went, thinking of thee, a little path amid nut
bushes winding. It has not led me to an end ;
O Girl, have pity on that poor bruised path,
which cannot speak its heart, and come and
pass by it. ? ? ? ? ?

Down there in the woods, O Hyld, a slender
willow tree is growing, wantoning with the young
Winds, and whispering, laughing with its white
leaves' secrets. Whene'er I watch the tree, joyous
under the smile of God's great sky, I am in
peace : how is it, Girl, that when I see thee
charming all men's eyes it sends me desperate,
distraught away? Hast thou no word for me ?

 ? ? ? ?
Down there in the woods, O Girl, is a sweet-
briar growing, beloved of birds, glowing with
berries red. When I passed by in spring its
fragrance called to me, but when I reached my



The
Lover
beseeches
his
Mistress

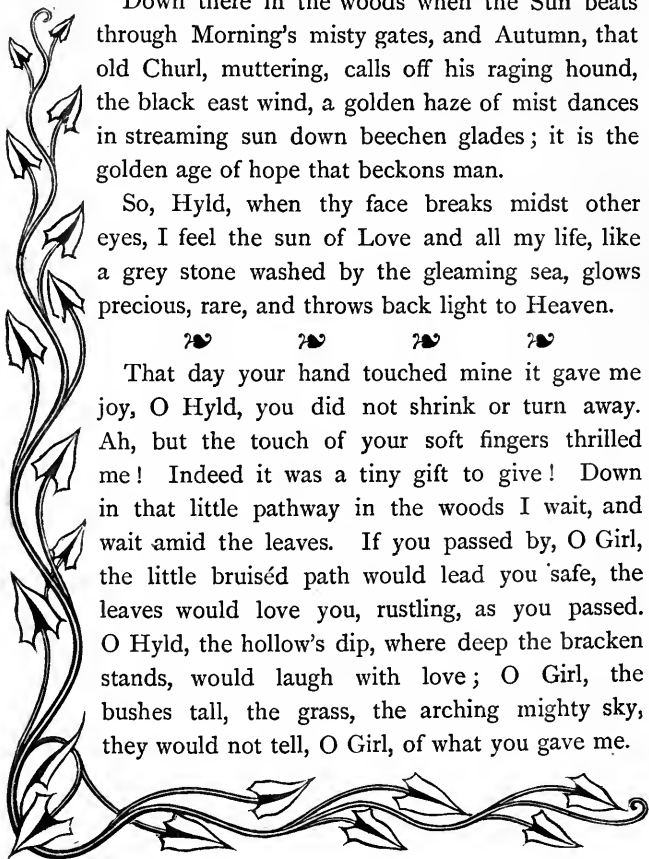
hand a sharp thorn made it bleed. So thy voice
in my heart makes the blood leap in fire ; and
now it burns, my heart is burnt by it. ♡ ♡

Down there in the woods when the Sun beats
through Morning's misty gates, and Autumn, that
old Churl, muttering, calls off his raging hound,
the black east wind, a golden haze of mist dances
in streaming sun down beechen glades ; it is the
golden age of hope that beckons man.

So, Hyld, when thy face breaks midst other
eyes, I feel the sun of Love and all my life, like
a grey stone washed by the gleaming sea, glows
precious, rare, and throws back light to Heaven.

♡ ♡ ♡ ♡

That day your hand touched mine it gave me
joy, O Hyld, you did not shrink or turn away.
Ah, but the touch of your soft fingers thrilled
me ! Indeed it was a tiny gift to give ! Down
in that little pathway in the woods I wait, and
wait amid the leaves. If you passed by, O Girl,
the little bruised path would lead you 'safe, the
leaves would love you, rustling, as you passed.
O Hyld, the hollow's dip, where deep the bracken
stands, would laugh with love ; O Girl, the
bushes tall, the grass, the arching mighty sky,
they would not tell, O Girl, of what you gave me.



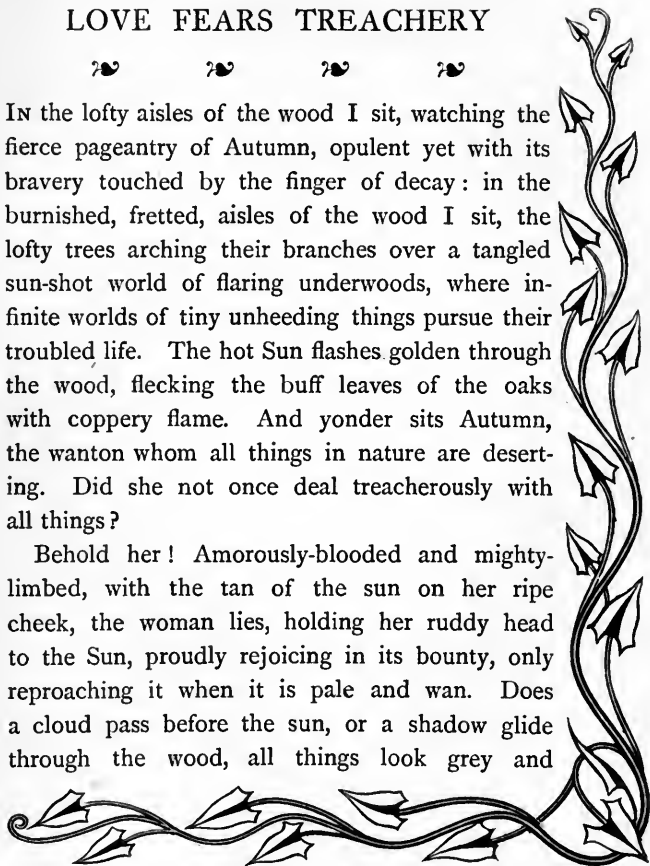
The Treachery of Autumn

LOVE FEARS TREACHERY



IN the lofty aisles of the wood I sit, watching the fierce pageantry of Autumn, opulent yet with its bravery touched by the finger of decay: in the burnished, fretted, aisles of the wood I sit, the lofty trees arching their branches over a tangled sun-shot world of flaring underwoods, where infinite worlds of tiny unheeding things pursue their troubled life. The hot Sun flashes golden through the wood, flecking the buff leaves of the oaks with coppery flame. And yonder sits Autumn, the wanton whom all things in nature are deserting. Did she not once deal treacherously with all things?

Behold her! Amorously-blooded and mighty-limbed, with the tan of the sun on her ripe cheek, the woman lies, holding her ruddy head to the Sun, proudly rejoicing in its bounty, only reproaching it when it is pale and wan. Does a cloud pass before the sun, or a shadow glide through the wood, all things look grey and

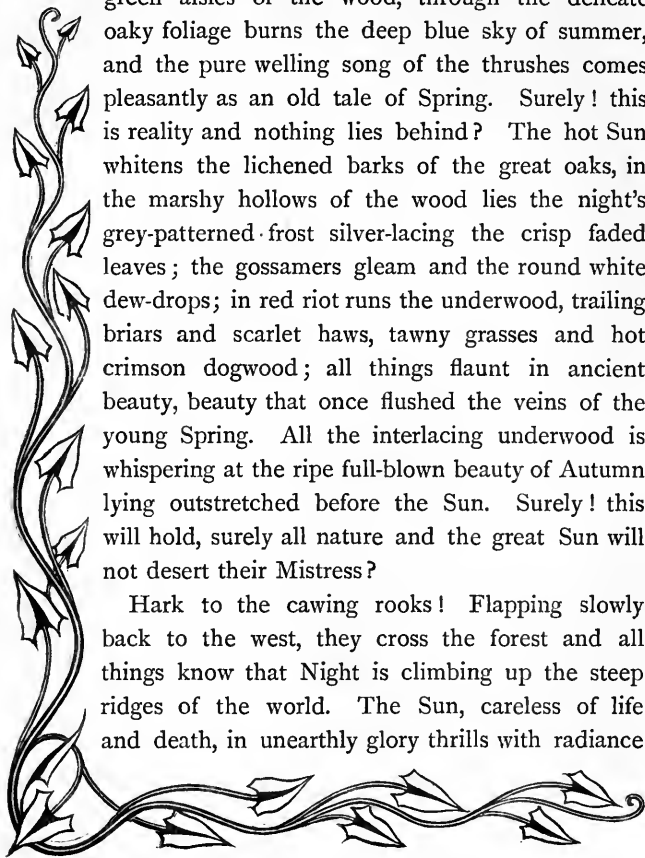


Love
fears
Treach-
ery

affrighted, for who but Autumn betrayed the earth to winter? A shadow comes and passes.

And now again the hot sun pours through the green aisles of the wood, through the delicate oaky foliage burns the deep blue sky of summer, and the pure welling song of the thrushes comes pleasantly as an old tale of Spring. Surely! this is reality and nothing lies behind? The hot Sun whitens the lichened barks of the great oaks, in the marshy hollows of the wood lies the night's grey-patterned frost silver-lacing the crisp faded leaves; the gossamers gleam and the round white dew-drops; in red riot runs the underwood, trailing briars and scarlet haws, tawny grasses and hot crimson dogwood; all things flaunt in ancient beauty, beauty that once flushed the veins of the young Spring. All the interlacing underwood is whispering at the ripe full-blown beauty of Autumn lying outstretched before the Sun. Surely! this will hold, surely all nature and the great Sun will not desert their Mistress?

Hark to the cawing rooks! Flapping slowly back to the west, they cross the forest and all things know that Night is climbing up the steep ridges of the world. The Sun, careless of life and death, in unearthly glory thrills with radiance



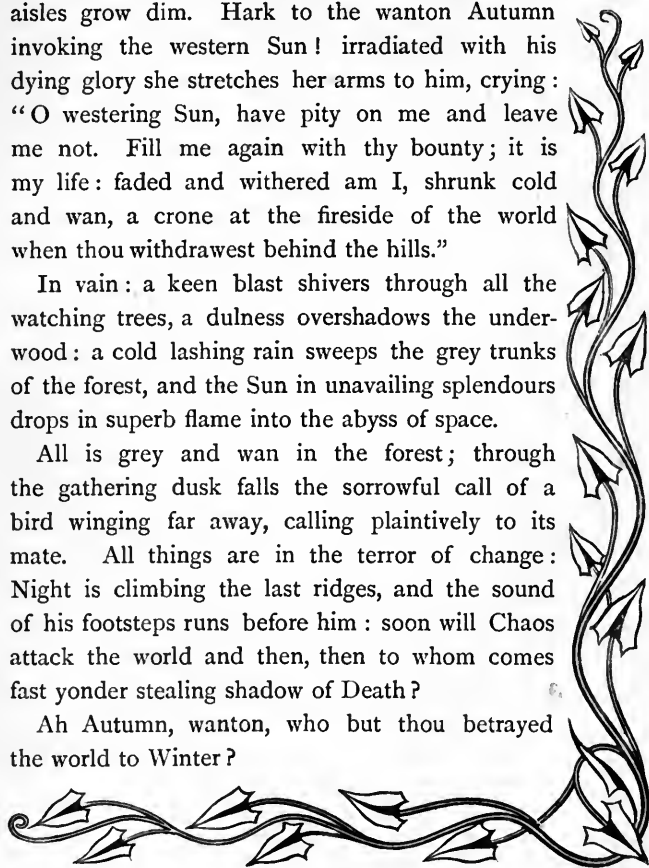
all beneath him; it is the sunset hour! But yonder look! already half the mighty cathedral of the wood is in shadow, and slowly the farther aisles grow dim. Hark to the wanton Autumn invoking the western Sun! irradiated with his dying glory she stretches her arms to him, crying: "O westerling Sun, have pity on me and leave me not. Fill me again with thy bounty; it is my life: faded and withered am I, shrunk cold and wan, a crone at the fireside of the world when thou withdrawest behind the hills."

In vain: a keen blast shivers through all the watching trees, a dulness overshadows the under-wood: a cold lashing rain sweeps the grey trunks of the forest, and the Sun in unavailing splendours drops in superb flame into the abyss of space.

All is grey and wan in the forest; through the gathering dusk falls the sorrowful call of a bird winging far away, calling plaintively to its mate. All things are in the terror of change: Night is climbing the last ridges, and the sound of his footsteps runs before him: soon will Chaos attack the world and then, then to whom comes fast yonder stealing shadow of Death?

Ah Autumn, wanton, who but thou betrayed the world to Winter?

Lobe
fears
Treach-
ery



Thorn-Blossoms in Black Night

THE LOVER CRIES TO THE NIGHT

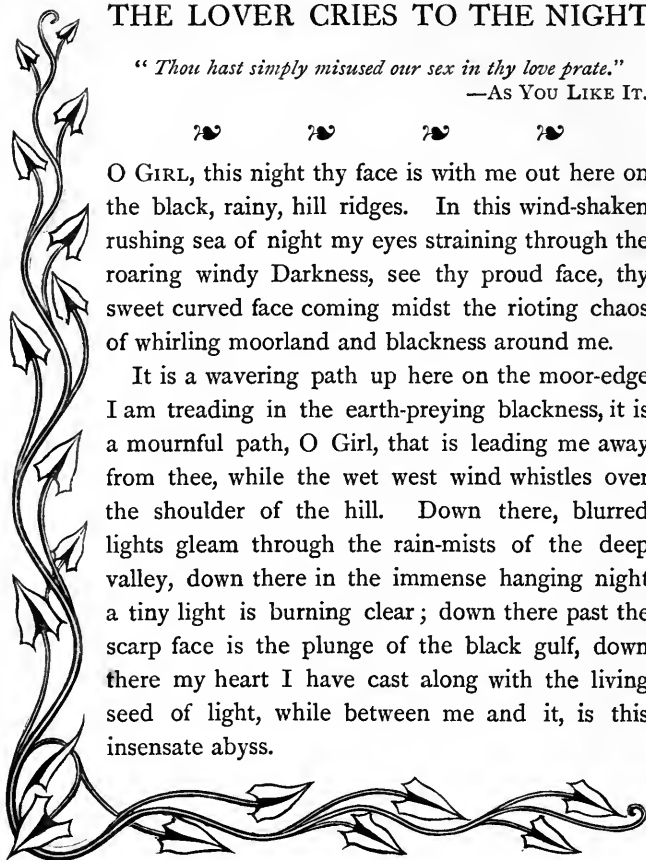
"Thou hast simply misused our sex in thy love prate."

—AS YOU LIKE IT.



O GIRL, this night thy face is with me out here on the black, rainy, hill ridges. In this wind-shaken rushing sea of night my eyes straining through the roaring windy Darkness, see thy proud face, thy sweet curved face coming midst the rioting chaos of whirling moorland and blackness around me.

It is a wavering path up here on the moor-edge I am treading in the earth-preying blackness, it is a mournful path, O Girl, that is leading me away from thee, while the wet west wind whistles over the shoulder of the hill. Down there, blurred lights gleam through the rain-mists of the deep valley, down there in the immense hanging night a tiny light is burning clear; down there past the scarp face is the plunge of the black gulf, down there my heart I have cast along with the living seed of light, while between me and it, is this insensate abyss.



Thorn-Blossoms in Black Night

33

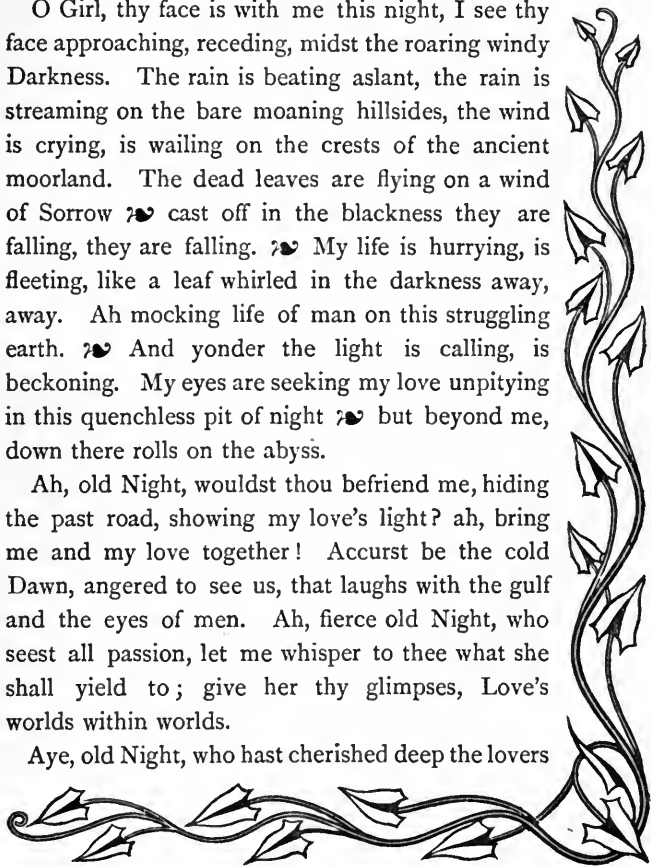
O Hyld, what if the Night that yields the stars
should hold our fate? What if the envious Sun-
light, hiding those vast worlds, betray us?

The
Lover
cries to
the Night

O Girl, thy face is with me this night, I see thy
face approaching, receding, midst the roaring windy
Darkness. The rain is beating aslant, the rain is
streaming on the bare moaning hillsides, the wind
is crying, is wailing on the crests of the ancient
moorland. The dead leaves are flying on a wind
of Sorrow ♡ cast off in the blackness they are
falling, they are falling. ♡ My life is hurrying, is
fleeting, like a leaf whirled in the darkness away,
away. Ah mocking life of man on this struggling
earth. ♡ And yonder the light is calling, is
beckoning. My eyes are seeking my love un pitying
in this quenchless pit of night ♡ but beyond me,
down there rolls on the abyss.

Ah, old Night, wouldst thou befriend me, hiding
the past road, showing my love's light? ah, bring
me and my love together! Accurst be the cold
Dawn, angered to see us, that laughs with the gulf
and the eyes of men. Ah, fierce old Night, who
seest all passion, let me whisper to thee what she
shall yield to; give her thy glimpses, Love's
worlds within worlds.

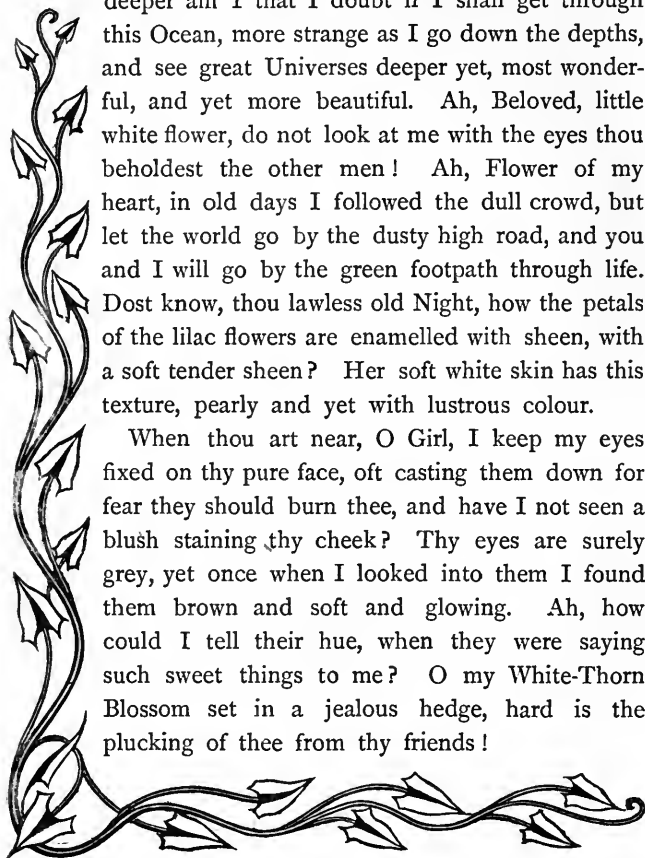
Aye, old Night, who hast cherished deep the lovers



The
Lover
cries to
the Night

of this ancient world, I thought the roots of Love were of the earth, but I had never seen the flower. Ah, I have been deep in love too, but now so deeper am I that I doubt if I shall get through this Ocean, more strange as I go down the depths, and see great Universes deeper yet, most wonderful, and yet more beautiful. Ah, Beloved, little white flower, do not look at me with the eyes thou beholdest the other men! Ah, Flower of my heart, in old days I followed the dull crowd, but let the world go by the dusty high road, and you and I will go by the green footpath through life. Dost know, thou lawless old Night, how the petals of the lilac flowers are enamelled with sheen, with a soft tender sheen? Her soft white skin has this texture, pearly and yet with lustrous colour.

When thou art near, O Girl, I keep my eyes fixed on thy pure face, oft casting them down for fear they should burn thee, and have I not seen a blush staining thy cheek? Thy eyes are surely grey, yet once when I looked into them I found them brown and soft and glowing. Ah, how could I tell their hue, when they were saying such sweet things to me? O my White-Thorn Blossom set in a jealous hedge, hard is the plucking of thee from thy friends!

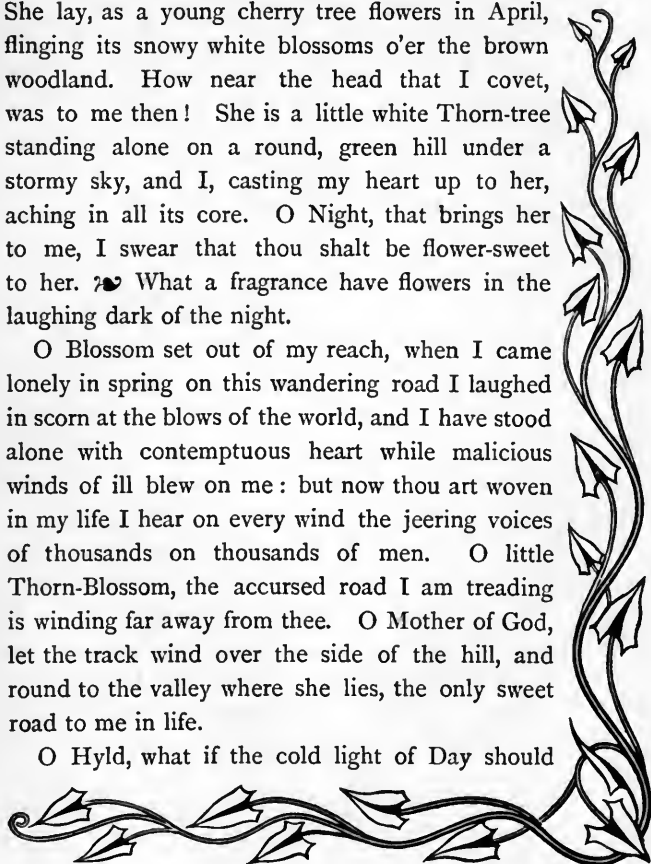


Listen, Night ! the twin curved lips of her tiny mouth are two little red flowers full of fragrance : last night I dreamed of them touching my cheek. She lay, as a young cherry tree flowers in April, flinging its snowy white blossoms o'er the brown woodland. How near the head that I covet, was to me then ! She is a little white Thorn-tree standing alone on a round, green hill under a stormy sky, and I, casting my heart up to her, aching in all its core. O Night, that brings her to me, I swear that thou shalt be flower-sweet to her. ♡ What a fragrance have flowers in the laughing dark of the night.

O Blossom set out of my reach, when I came lonely in spring on this wandering road I laughed in scorn at the blows of the world, and I have stood alone with contemptuous heart while malicious winds of ill blew on me : but now thou art woven in my life I hear on every wind the jeering voices of thousands on thousands of men. O little Thorn-Blossom, the accursed road I am treading is winding far away from thee. O Mother of God, let the track wind over the side of the hill, and round to the valley where she lies, the only sweet road to me in life.

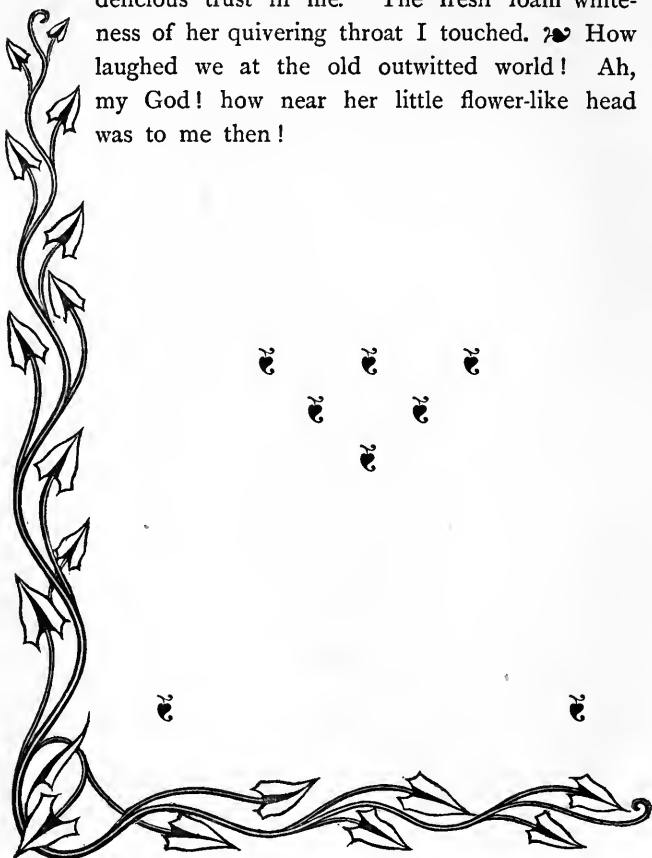
O Hyld, what if the cold light of Day should

The
Lover
cries to
the Night



The
Lover
cries to
the Night

part us? O Girl, what if our love is stronger than a thousand worlds? In the night I dreamed I heard thy silvery voice, whispering, whispering delicious trust in me. The fresh foam whiteness of her quivering throat I touched. ♡ How laughed we at the old outwitted world! Ah, my God! how near her little flower-like head was to me then!



The Elemental Freedom of Night

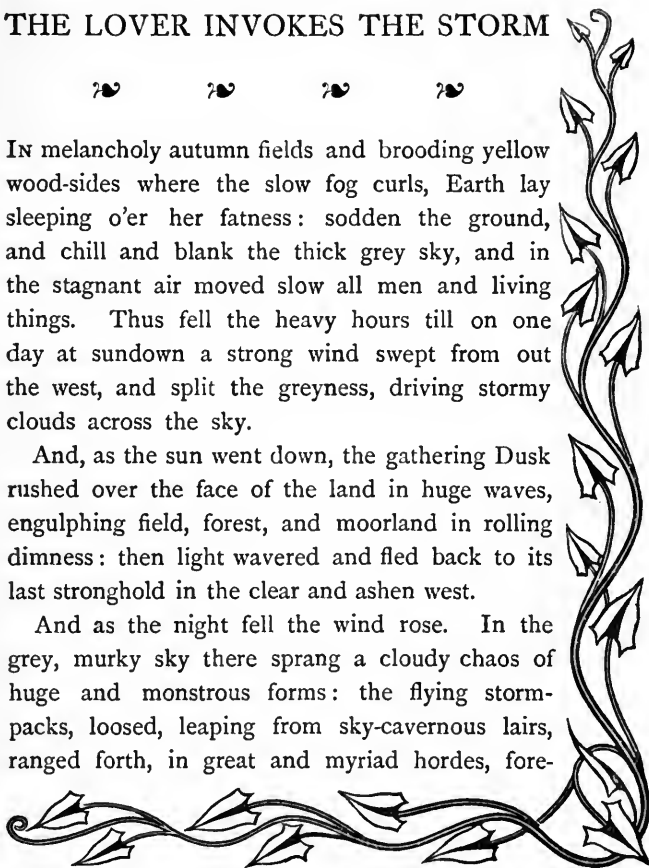
THE LOVER INVOKES THE STORM



IN melancholy autumn fields and brooding yellow wood-sides where the slow fog curls, Earth lay sleeping o'er her fatness: sodden the ground, and chill and blank the thick grey sky, and in the stagnant air moved slow all men and living things. Thus fell the heavy hours till on one day at sundown a strong wind swept from out the west, and split the greyness, driving stormy clouds across the sky.

And, as the sun went down, the gathering Dusk rushed over the face of the land in huge waves, engulfing field, forest, and moorland in rolling dimness: then light wavered and fled back to its last stronghold in the clear and ashen west.

And as the night fell the wind rose. In the grey, murky sky there sprang a cloudy chaos of huge and monstrous forms: the flying storm-packs, loosed, leaping from sky-cavernous lairs, ranged forth, in great and myriad hordes, fore-



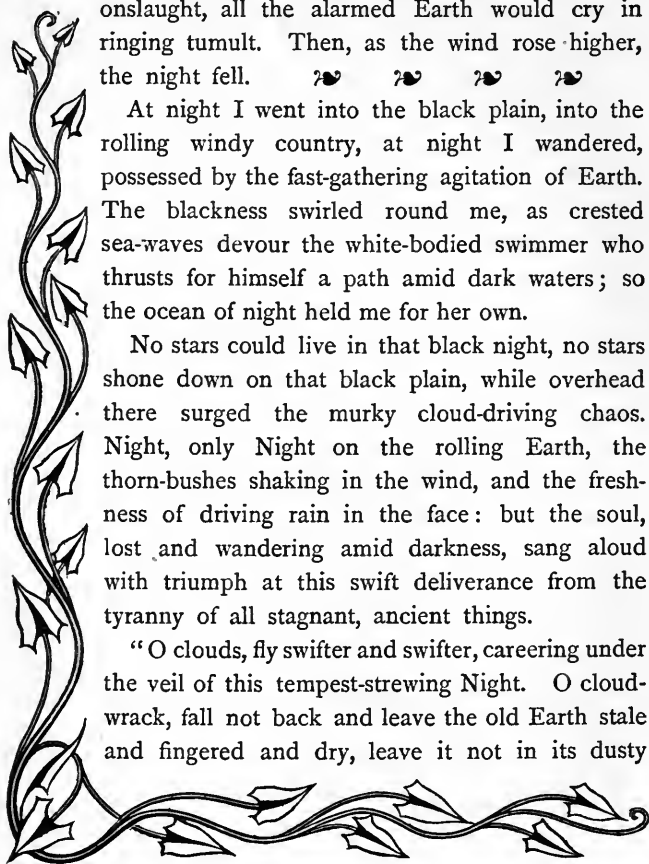
The
Lover in-
bokes the
Storm

shadowing the coming ravagement of Earth by tempest. All silently they slipped before the wind, but soon, cowering beneath their furious onslaught, all the alarmed Earth would cry in ringing tumult. Then, as the wind rose higher, the night fell. ? ? ? ?

At night I went into the black plain, into the rolling windy country, at night I wandered, possessed by the fast-gathering agitation of Earth. The blackness swirled round me, as crested sea-waves devour the white-bodied swimmer who thrusts for himself a path amid dark waters; so the ocean of night held me for her own.

No stars could live in that black night, no stars shone down on that black plain, while overhead there surged the murky cloud-driving chaos. Night, only Night on the rolling Earth, the thorn-bushes shaking in the wind, and the freshness of driving rain in the face: but the soul, lost and wandering amid darkness, sang aloud with triumph at this swift deliverance from the tyranny of all stagnant, ancient things.

"O clouds, fly swifter and swifter, careering under the veil of this tempest-strewing Night. O cloud-wrack, fall not back and leave the old Earth stale and fingered and dry, leave it not in its dusty

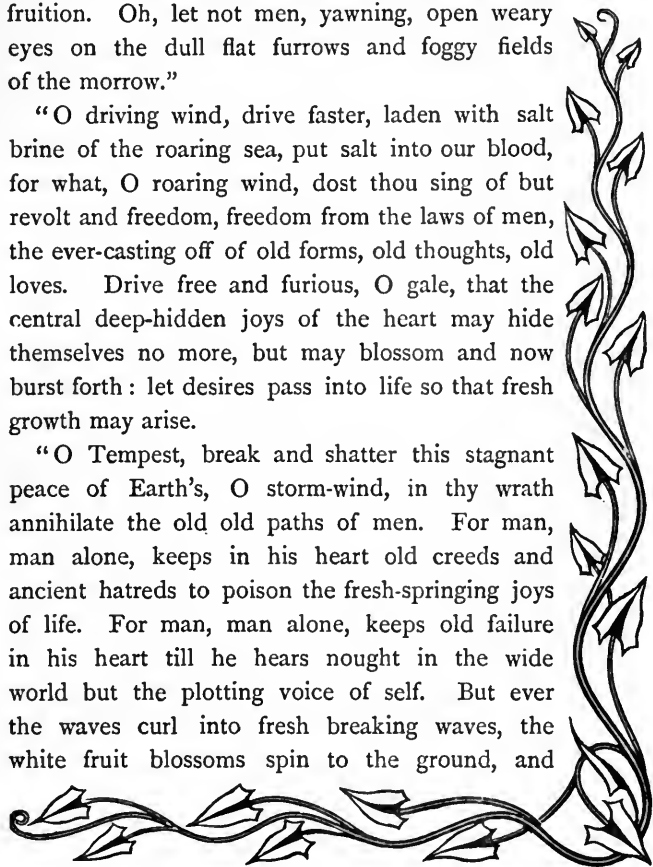


lethargy, but overwhelm us, surround us, o'ercome us, O clouds, with the white-rushing deluge: let this be a night of forced conception, of strong fruition. Oh, let not men, yawning, open weary eyes on the dull flat furrows and foggy fields of the morrow."

"O driving wind, drive faster, laden with salt brine of the roaring sea, put salt into our blood, for what, O roaring wind, dost thou sing of but revolt and freedom, freedom from the laws of men, the ever-casting off of old forms, old thoughts, old loves. Drive free and furious, O gale, that the central deep-hidden joys of the heart may hide themselves no more, but may blossom and now burst forth: let desires pass into life so that fresh growth may arise.

"O Tempest, break and shatter this stagnant peace of Earth's, O storm-wind, in thy wrath annihilate the old old paths of men. For man, man alone, keeps in his heart old creeds and ancient hatreds to poison the fresh-springing joys of life. For man, man alone, keeps old failure in his heart till he hears nought in the wide world but the plotting voice of self. But ever the waves curl into fresh breaking waves, the white fruit blossoms spin to the ground, and

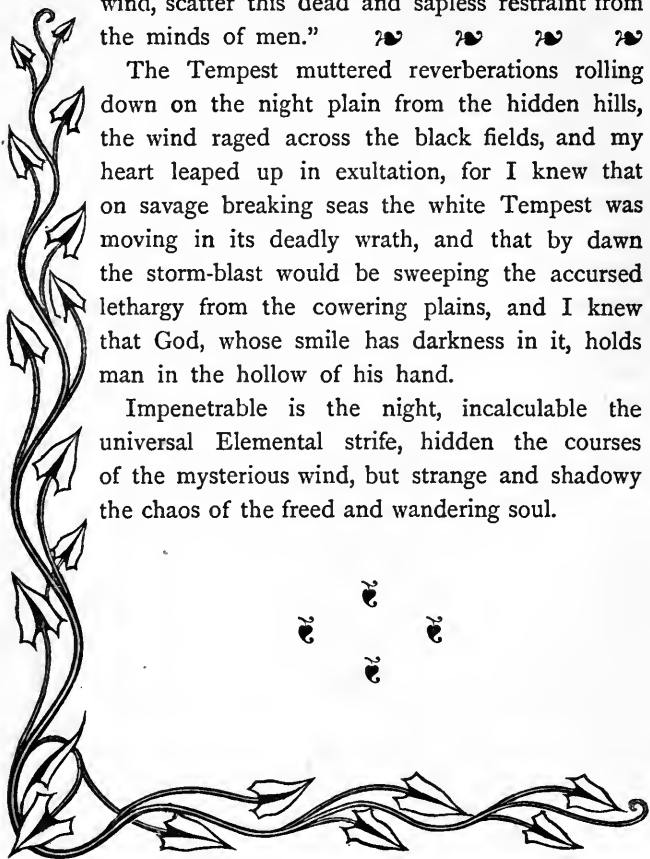
The
Lover in=
vokes the
Storm



The sun-coloured fruit drops from the stem to
 leave a silvery downy bud. O storm-wind,
 sweep the sour mists from the land, O storm-
 wind, scatter this dead and sapless restraint from
 the minds of men." ♀ ♀ ♀ ♀

The Tempest muttered reverberations rolling
 down on the night plain from the hidden hills,
 the wind raged across the black fields, and my
 heart leaped up in exultation, for I knew that
 on savage breaking seas the white Tempest was
 moving in its deadly wrath, and that by dawn
 the storm-blast would be sweeping the accursed
 lethargy from the cowering plains, and I knew
 that God, whose smile has darkness in it, holds
 man in the hollow of his hand.

Impenetrable is the night, incalculable the
 universal Elemental strife, hidden the courses
 of the mysterious wind, but strange and shadowy
 the chaos of the freed and wandering soul.



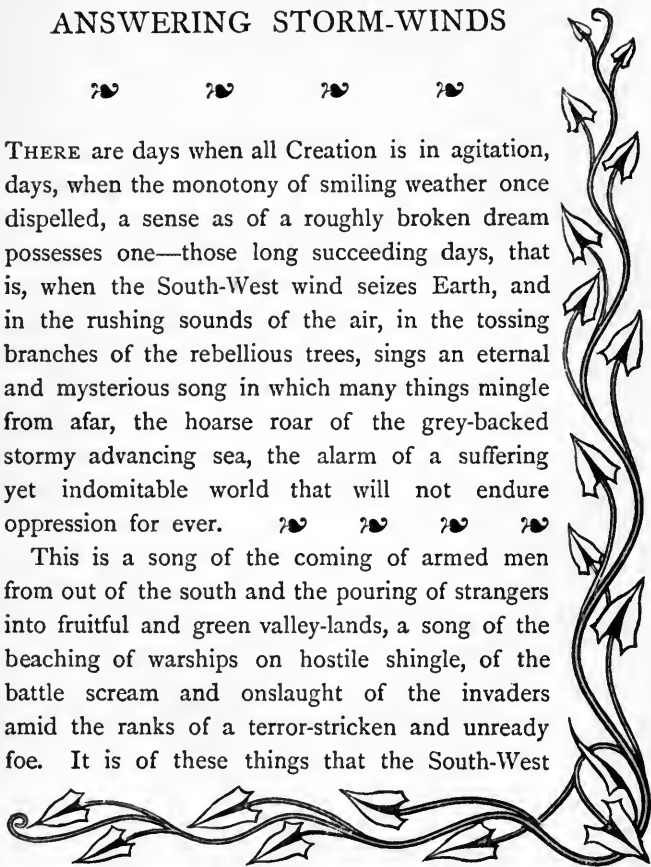
The South-West Wind seizes Earth

ANSWERING STORM-WINDS



THERE are days when all Creation is in agitation, days, when the monotony of smiling weather once dispelled, a sense as of a roughly broken dream possesses one—those long succeeding days, that is, when the South-West wind seizes Earth, and in the rushing sounds of the air, in the tossing branches of the rebellious trees, sings an eternal and mysterious song in which many things mingle from afar, the hoarse roar of the grey-backed stormy advancing sea, the alarm of a suffering yet indomitable world that will not endure oppression for ever.

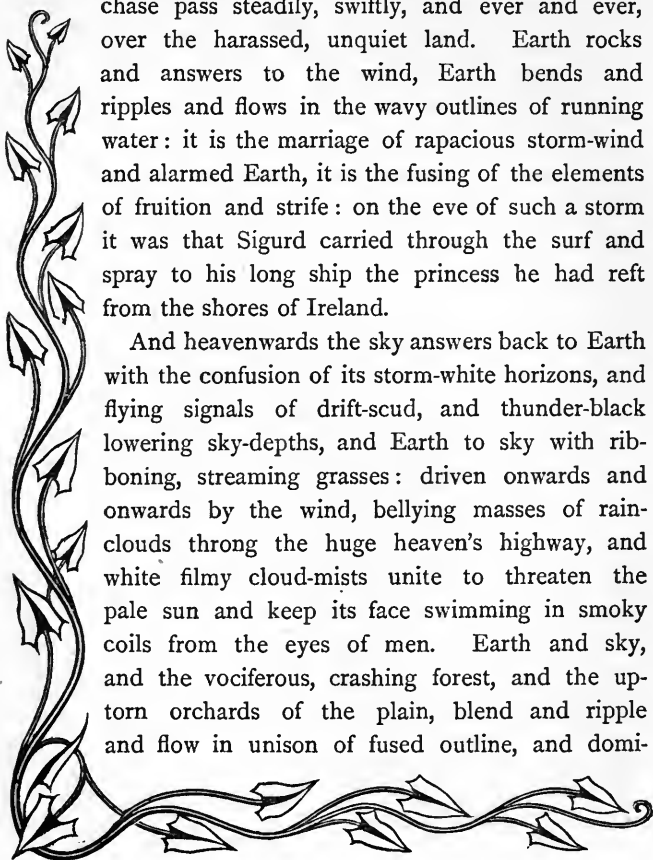
This is a song of the coming of armed men from out of the south and the pouring of strangers into fruitful and green valley-lands, a song of the beaching of warships on hostile shingle, of the battle scream and onslaught of the invaders amid the ranks of a terror-stricken and unready foe. It is of these things that the South-West



Answer-
ing
Storm-
Winds

wind sings as the never-ending dark grey clouds swarm in multitudinous invasion over the rim of the green Earth, and in their sleuth-hound chase pass steadily, swiftly, and ever and ever, over the harassed, unquiet land. Earth rocks and answers to the wind, Earth bends and ripples and flows in the wavy outlines of running water: it is the marriage of rapacious storm-wind and alarmed Earth, it is the fusing of the elements of fruition and strife: on the eve of such a storm it was that Sigurd carried through the surf and spray to his long ship the princess he had reft from the shores of Ireland.

And heavenwards the sky answers back to Earth with the confusion of its storm-white horizons, and flying signals of drift-scud, and thunder-black lowering sky-depths, and Earth to sky with rib-boning, streaming grasses: driven onwards and onwards by the wind, bellying masses of rain-clouds throng the huge heaven's highway, and white filmy cloud-mists unite to threaten the pale sun and keep its face swimming in smoky coils from the eyes of men. Earth and sky, and the vociferous, crashing forest, and the up-torn orchards of the plain, blend and ripple and flow in unison of fused outline, and domi-

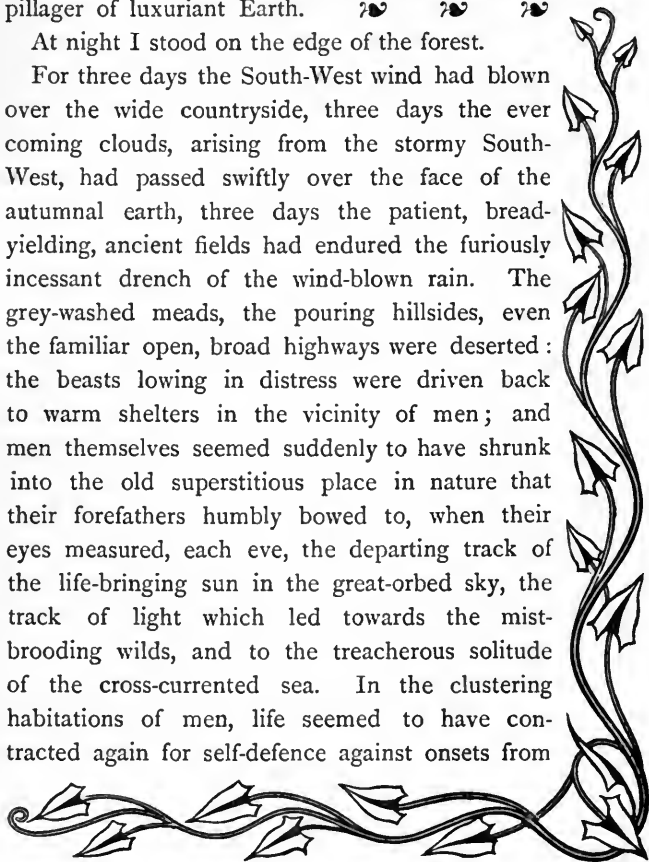


nating, controlling all, everywhere is heard the roar of the South-West wind, the invader, the disturber, the scatterer of the harvest-field, the pillager of luxuriant Earth. ? ? ?

Answer=
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Storm=
Winds

At night I stood on the edge of the forest.

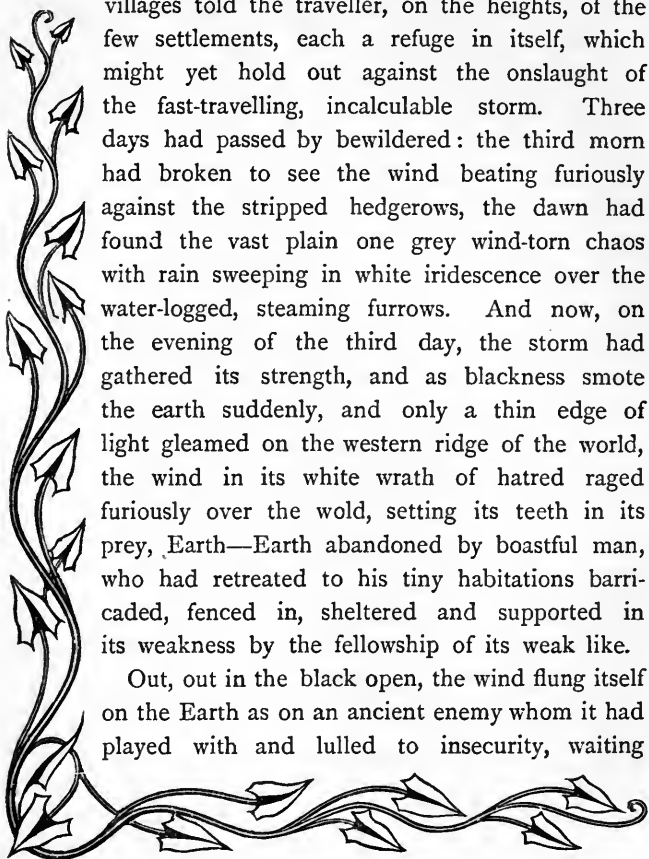
For three days the South-West wind had blown over the wide countryside, three days the ever coming clouds, arising from the stormy South-West, had passed swiftly over the face of the autumnal earth, three days the patient, bread-yielding, ancient fields had endured the furiously incessant drench of the wind-blown rain. The grey-washed meads, the pouring hillsides, even the familiar open, broad highways were deserted: the beasts lowing in distress were driven back to warm shelters in the vicinity of men; and men themselves seemed suddenly to have shrunk into the old superstitious place in nature that their forefathers humbly bowed to, when their eyes measured, each eve, the departing track of the life-bringing sun in the great-orbed sky, the track of light which led towards the mist-brooding wilds, and to the treacherous solitude of the cross-currented sea. In the clustering habitations of men, life seemed to have contracted again for self-defence against onsets from



Answer-
ing
Storm-
Winds

without : all doors were shut, women and children with the men drew nearer to the hearth, and at night, the far scattered lights of the valley villages told the traveller, on the heights, of the few settlements, each a refuge in itself, which might yet hold out against the onslaught of the fast-travelling, incalculable storm. Three days had passed by bewildered : the third morn had broken to see the wind beating furiously against the stripped hedgerows, the dawn had found the vast plain one grey wind-torn chaos with rain sweeping in white iridescence over the water-logged, steaming furrows. And now, on the evening of the third day, the storm had gathered its strength, and as blackness smote the earth suddenly, and only a thin edge of light gleamed on the western ridge of the world, the wind in its white wrath of hatred raged furiously over the wold, setting its teeth in its prey, Earth—Earth abandoned by boastful man, who had retreated to his tiny habitations barricaded, fenced in, sheltered and supported in its weakness by the fellowship of its weak like.

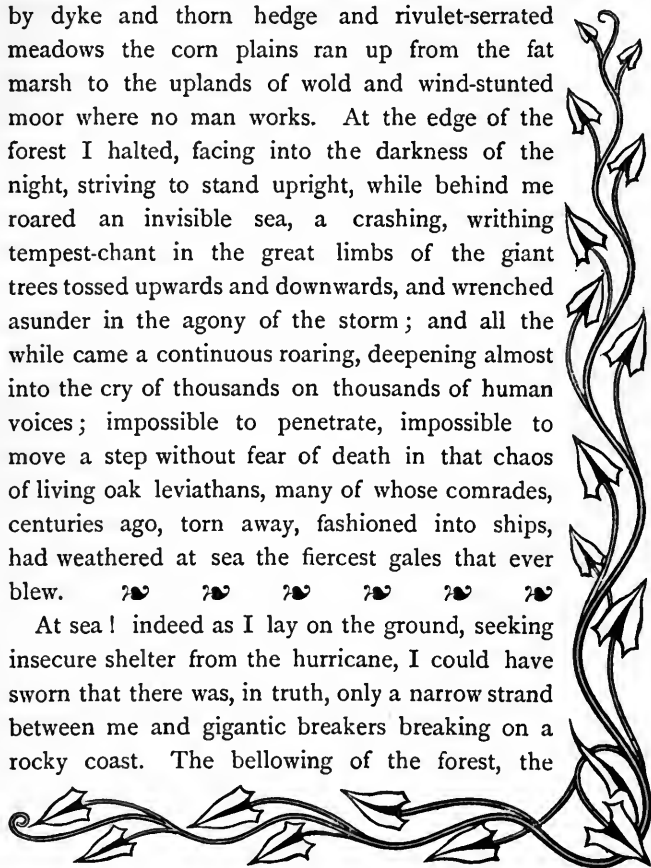
Out, out in the black open, the wind flung itself on the Earth as on an ancient enemy whom it had played with and lulled to insecurity, waiting



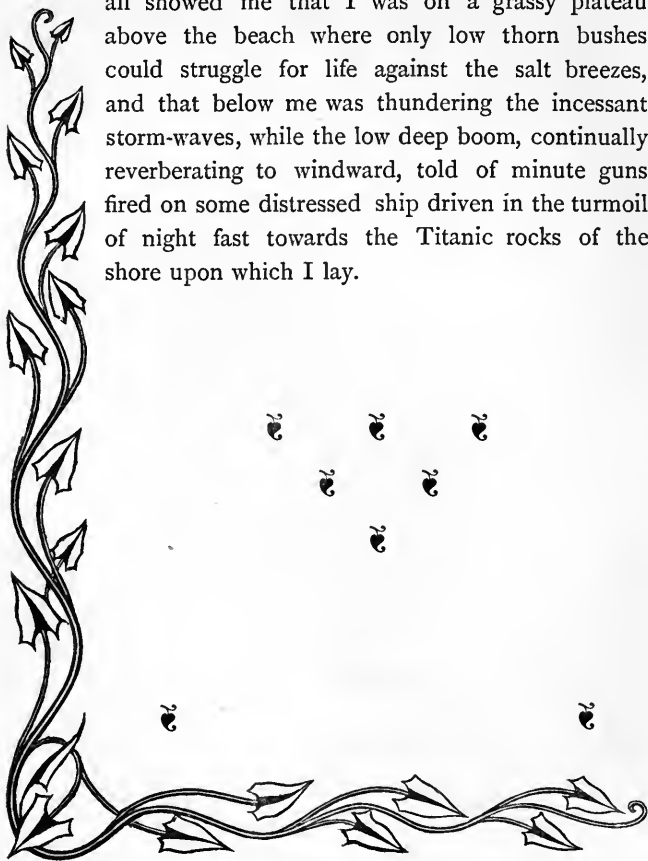
warily for long weary months to destroy it. From the edge of the great forest stretched the mile-arching round of the devastated corn plains, by dyke and thorn hedge and rivulet-serrated meadows the corn plains ran up from the fat marsh to the uplands of wold and wind-stunted moor where no man works. At the edge of the forest I halted, facing into the darkness of the night, striving to stand upright, while behind me roared an invisible sea, a crashing, writhing tempest-chant in the great limbs of the giant trees tossed upwards and downwards, and wrenched asunder in the agony of the storm; and all the while came a continuous roaring, deepening almost into the cry of thousands on thousands of human voices; impossible to penetrate, impossible to move a step without fear of death in that chaos of living oak leviathans, many of whose comrades, centuries ago, torn away, fashioned into ships, had weathered at sea the fiercest gales that ever blew. ? ? ? ? ? ?

At sea! indeed as I lay on the ground, seeking insecure shelter from the hurricane, I could have sworn that there was, in truth, only a narrow strand between me and gigantic breakers breaking on a rocky coast. The bellowing of the forest, the

Answer=
ing
Storm=
Winds



Answer-
ing
Storm-
Winds frenzied shrieking of the wind shrilling in my ears,
the lashing of every fibre of all-suffering nature,
the dashing drenching of the spray-blown rain—
all showed me that I was on a grassy plateau
above the beach where only low thorn bushes
could struggle for life against the salt breezes,
and that below me was thundering the incessant
storm-waves, while the low deep boom, continually
reverberating to windward, told of minute guns
fired on some distressed ship driven in the turmoil
of night fast towards the Titanic rocks of the
shore upon which I lay.



Ancient Cornfields

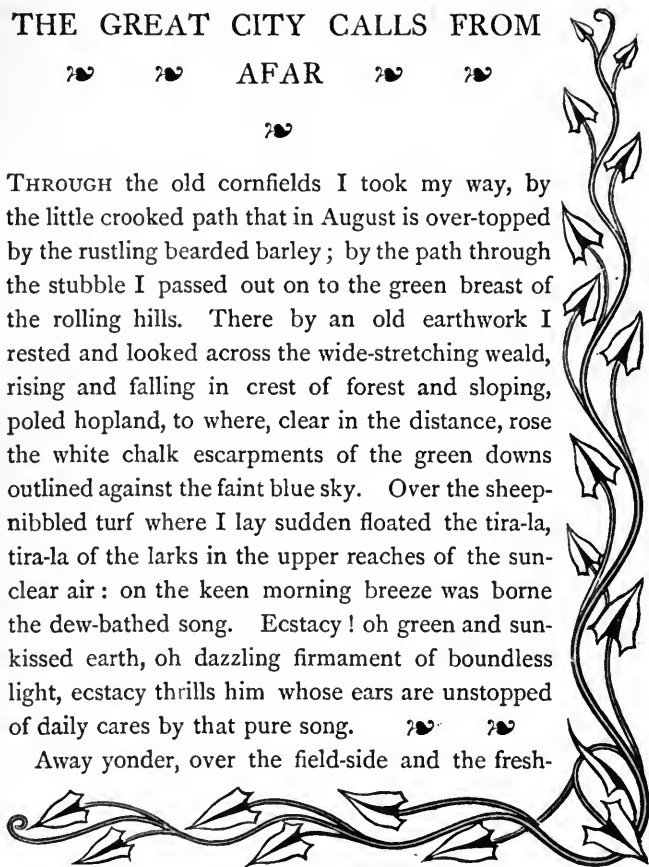
THE GREAT CITY CALLS FROM

~ ~ AFAR ~ ~

~

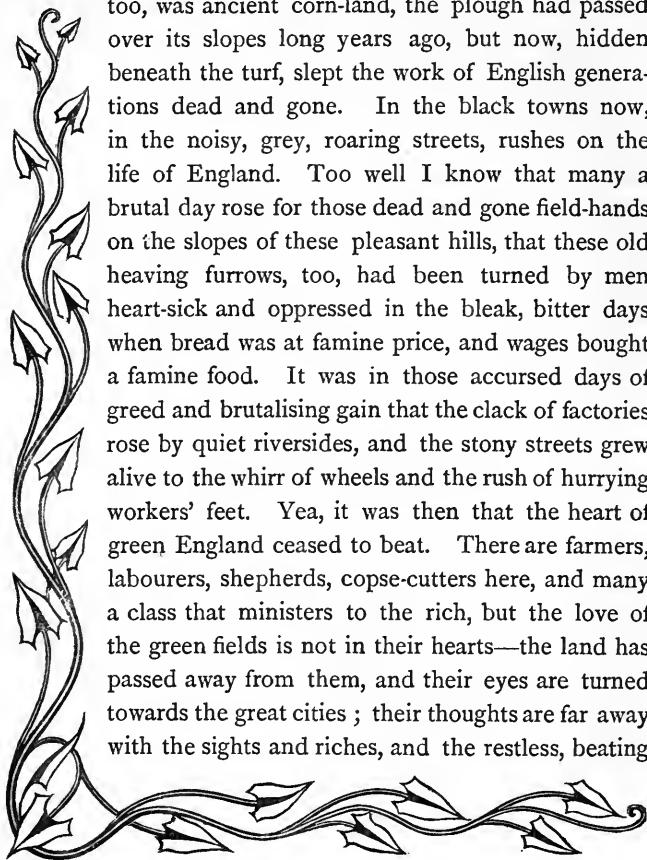
THROUGH the old cornfields I took my way, by the little crooked path that in August is over-topped by the rustling bearded barley ; by the path through the stubble I passed out on to the green breast of the rolling hills. There by an old earthwork I rested and looked across the wide-stretching weald, rising and falling in crest of forest and sloping, poled hopland, to where, clear in the distance, rose the white chalk escarpments of the green downs outlined against the faint blue sky. Over the sheep-nibbled turf where I lay sudden floated the tira-la, tira-la of the larks in the upper reaches of the sun-clear air : on the keen morning breeze was borne the dew-bathed song. Ecstasy ! oh green and sun-kissed earth, oh dazzling firmament of boundless light, ecstasy thrills him whose ears are unstopped of daily cares by that pure song. ~ ~

Away yonder, over the field-side and the fresh-



The
Great
City
calls
from afar

turned furrows, drifted the larks, singing ; and as their song came down to me I saw that the green fields where I lay heaved too in faint furrows : it, too, was ancient corn-land, the plough had passed over its slopes long years ago, but now, hidden beneath the turf, slept the work of English generations dead and gone. In the black towns now, in the noisy, grey, roaring streets, rushes on the life of England. Too well I know that many a brutal day rose for those dead and gone field-hands on the slopes of these pleasant hills, that these old heaving furrows, too, had been turned by men heart-sick and oppressed in the bleak, bitter days when bread was at famine price, and wages bought a famine food. It was in those accursed days of greed and brutalising gain that the clack of factories rose by quiet riversides, and the stony streets grew alive to the whirr of wheels and the rush of hurrying workers' feet. Yea, it was then that the heart of green England ceased to beat. There are farmers, labourers, shepherds, copse-cutters here, and many a class that ministers to the rich, but the love of the green fields is not in their hearts—the land has passed away from them, and their eyes are turned towards the great cities ; their thoughts are far away with the sights and riches, and the restless, beating



life, where their kinsmen and the sons of their kinsmen labour: the cities towards which their children have turned their footsteps, where the life of their children's children shall run out, till something turns that flowing human tide. ? ?

The
Great
City
calls
from afar

Over the sheep-nibbled turf, over the ancient furrows, floats the clear song of the larks from the sun-rayed sky: it has risen round these old grey manor-houses and timbered farmhouses in the ears of men whose ancestors fashioned the stones of the great Cathedral rising dim beyond the cleft of yonder hills, whose fathers reared, each man his dwelling-place by wattled sheepcote or by the sheltered brookside in fresh clearings on the edge of the wood. But now the life of the people has passed from the bread-yielding ancient fields; the old furrows slumber, and are turned no more by the generations that dwindle, that have followed after. ? ? ? ? ?

Go, at night, up the little stony lane that leads to the hillside, and, under the quiet stars, you shall hear a fitful, melancholy song deep in the roar of the keen North wind, rushing o'er the hills—it is the voice of the Great City that, insatiate, is crying for the lives of myriads of men, to use, to cast aside.

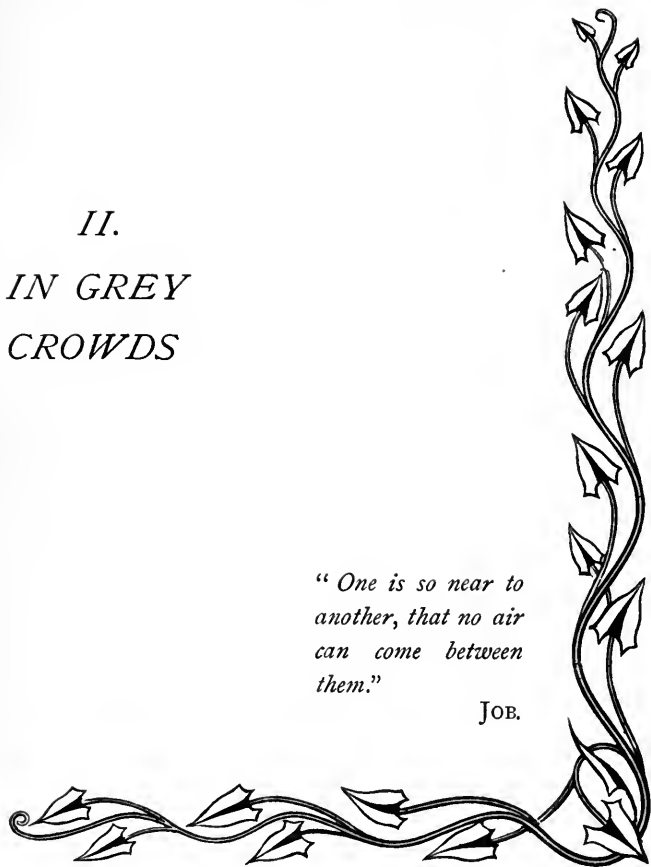


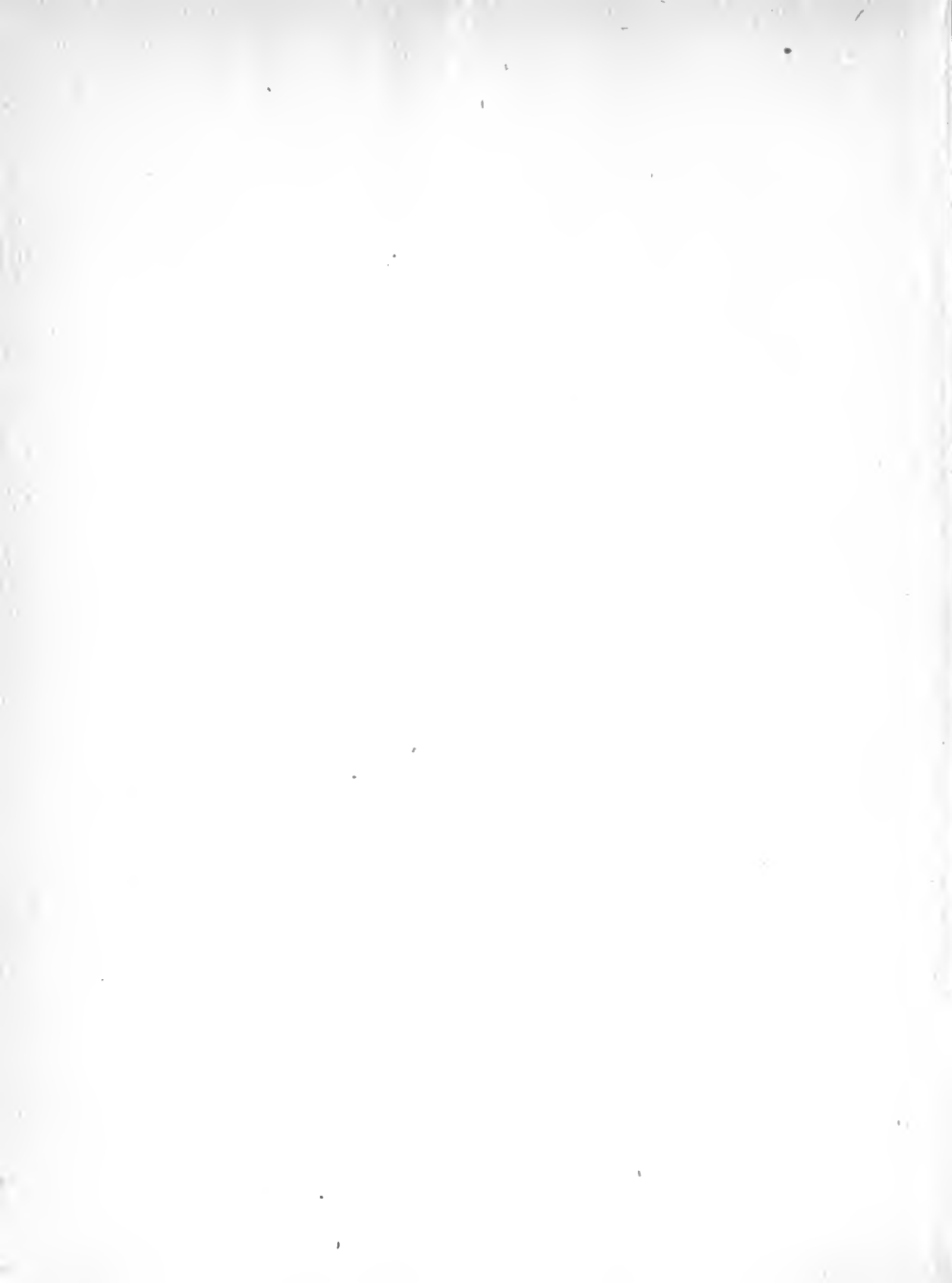


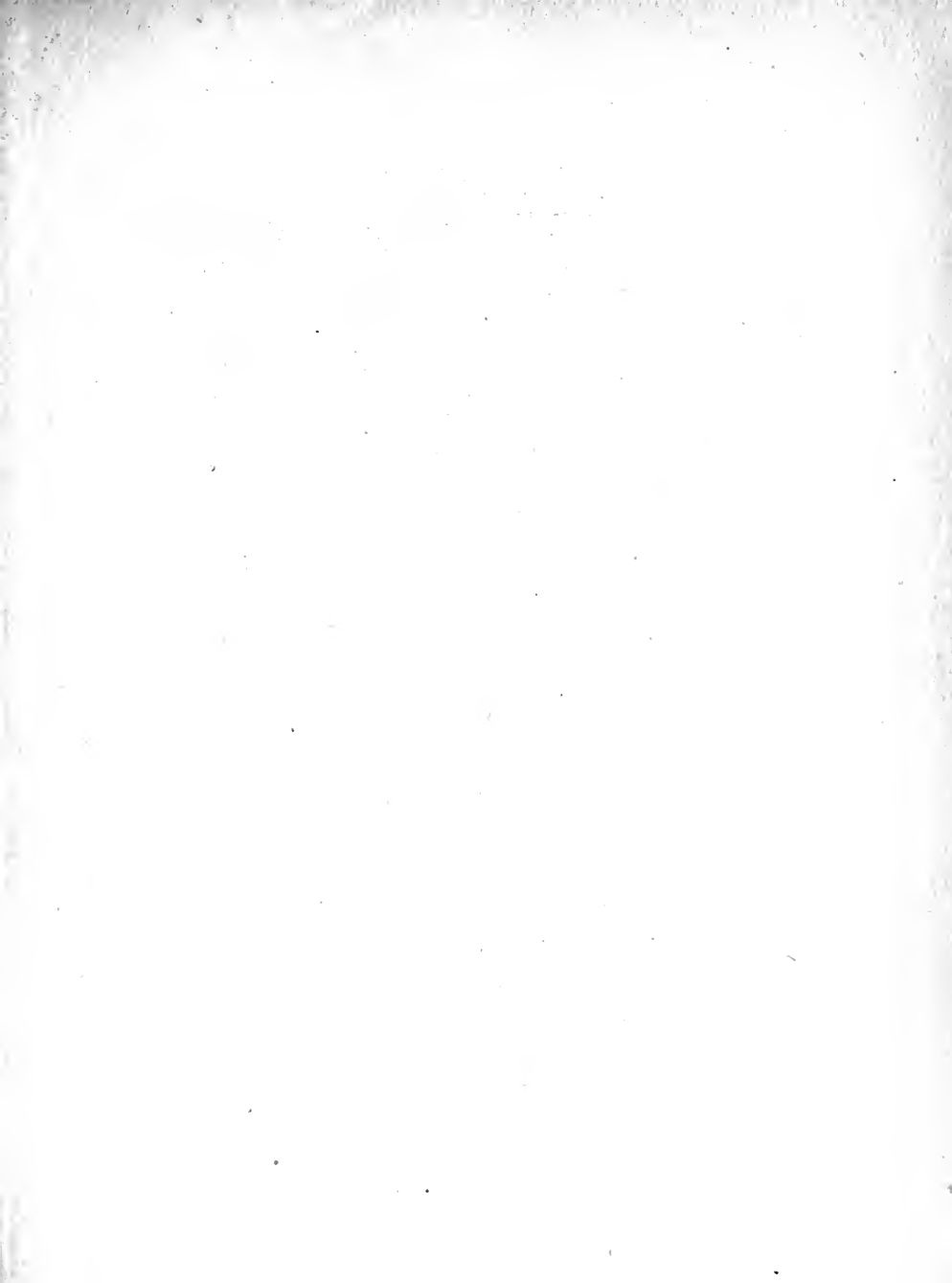
II.
IN GREY
CROWDS

*"One is so near to
another, that no air
can come between
them."*

JOB.







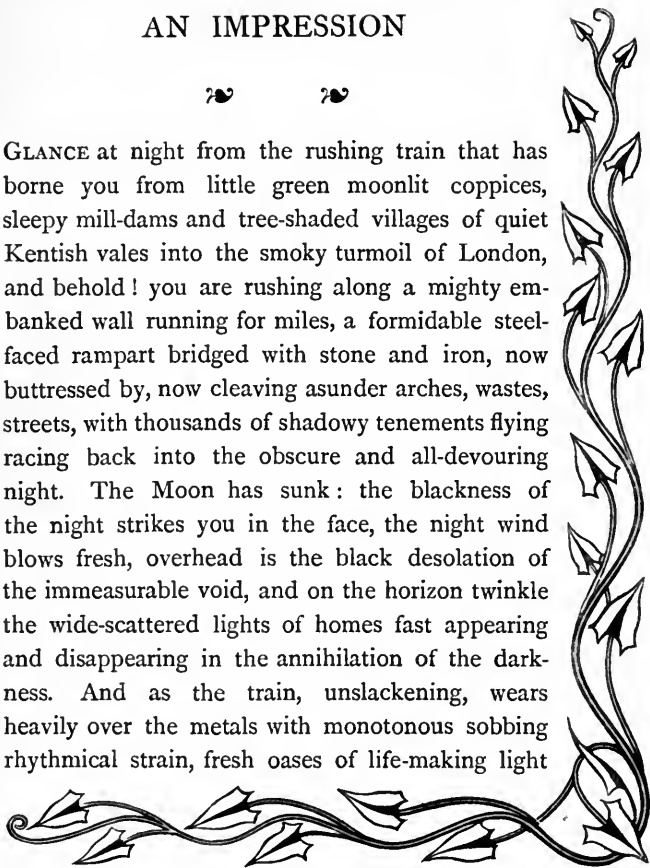


Entering London

AN IMPRESSION



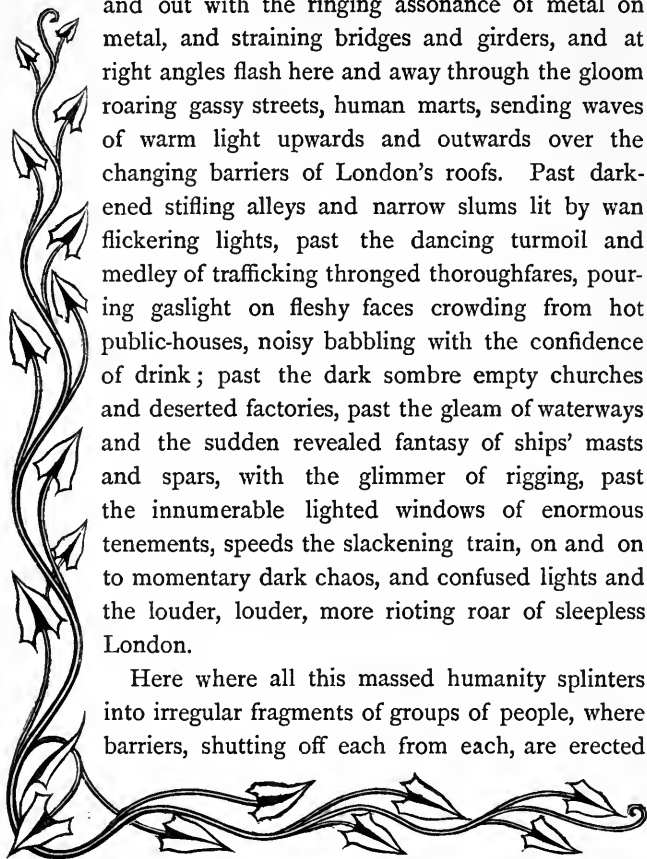
GLANCE at night from the rushing train that has borne you from little green moonlit coppices, sleepy mill-dams and tree-shaded villages of quiet Kentish vales into the smoky turmoil of London, and behold ! you are rushing along a mighty embanked wall running for miles, a formidable steel-faced rampart bridged with stone and iron, now buttressed by, now cleaving asunder arches, wastes, streets, with thousands of shadowy tenements flying racing back into the obscure and all-devouring night. The Moon has sunk : the blackness of the night strikes you in the face, the night wind blows fresh, overhead is the black desolation of the immeasurable void, and on the horizon twinkle the wide-scattered lights of homes fast appearing and disappearing in the annihilation of the darkness. And as the train, unslackening, wears heavily over the metals with monotonous sobbing rhythmical strain, fresh oases of life-making light



An Im-
pression

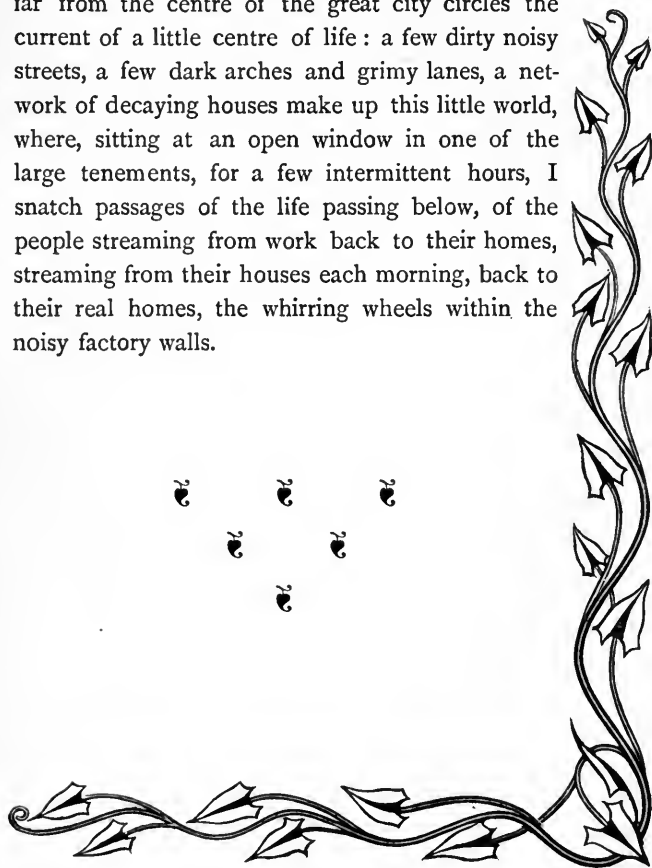
splash the darkness, and the pitchy horizon wavers with a fiery leaping flush as of molten metal ; the confused murmur of fast nearing streets threads in and out with the ringing assonance of metal on metal, and straining bridges and girders, and at right angles flash here and away through the gloom roaring gassy streets, human marts, sending waves of warm light upwards and outwards over the changing barriers of London's roofs. Past darkened stifling alleys and narrow slums lit by wan flickering lights, past the dancing turmoil and medley of trafficking thronged thoroughfares, pouring gaslight on fleshy faces crowding from hot public-houses, noisy babbling with the confidence of drink ; past the dark sombre empty churches and deserted factories, past the gleam of waterways and the sudden revealed fantasy of ships' masts and spars, with the glimmer of rigging, past the innumerable lighted windows of enormous tenements, speeds the slackening train, on and on to momentary dark chaos, and confused lights and the louder, louder, more rioting roar of sleepless London.

Here where all this massed humanity splinters into irregular fragments of groups of people, where barriers, shutting off each from each, are erected




by inviolable custom, here amid this formless grey
 Multitude struggling in the vortex of labour which
 each endures, goaded by the will-to-live, here not
 far from the centre of the great city circles the
 current of a little centre of life : a few dirty noisy
 streets, a few dark arches and grimy lanes, a net-
 work of decaying houses make up this little world,
 where, sitting at an open window in one of the
 large tenements, for a few intermittent hours, I
 snatch passages of the life passing below, of the
 people streaming from work back to their homes,
 streaming from their houses each morning, back to
 their real homes, the whirring wheels within the
 noisy factory walls.

An Im-
 pression




ON THE HIGHWAY

*I. Street—Night*

ALONG the midnight emptying street, this quiet street of Hell, the lamps stretch, a line of respectable yellow flame. There is traffic under them now when everybody is going home. The street itself is quiet, but from the distance floats the blare of a departing band, the brazen machine-made *fin de siècle* tune of hollow fun drifting onward with the far melancholy echoes, as though this mighty civilization were dying in a city of chaos. Overhead the stars are hid by a wild black sky, but the spectral Moon rides amid sinister rugged clouds which glide onwards, as towards a sinking ship of light going down amid black reefs and foam edged shores.

And suddenly the Moon is quietly engulfed amid the clouds—as an ill-fated swimmer is sucked under by the strong swirl of black-channelled depths. Then her bright disc emerges again!

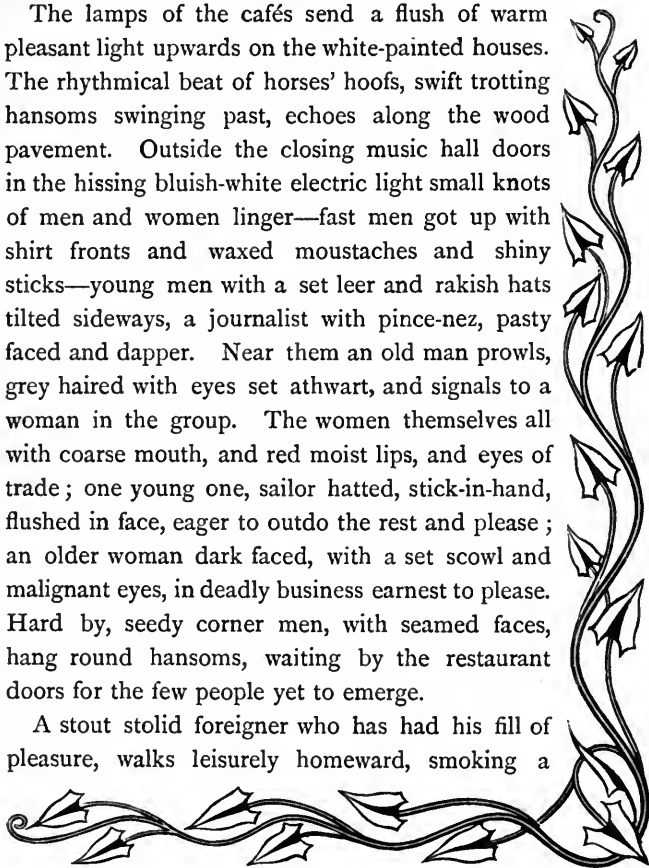
Ah! thou old spectral theatre of woes, thy silver



beauty is but a lure. O Circe of the night, a bait of beauty here amid dark secrets of disease and death. On the Highway

The lamps of the cafés send a flush of warm pleasant light upwards on the white-painted houses. The rhythmical beat of horses' hoofs, swift trotting hansoms swinging past, echoes along the wood pavement. Outside the closing music hall doors in the hissing bluish-white electric light small knots of men and women linger—fast men got up with shirt fronts and waxed moustaches and shiny sticks—young men with a set leer and rakish hats tilted sideways, a journalist with pince-nez, pasty faced and dapper. Near them an old man prowls, grey haired with eyes set athwart, and signals to a woman in the group. The women themselves all with coarse mouth, and red moist lips, and eyes of trade; one young one, sailor hatted, stick-in-hand, flushed in face, eager to outdo the rest and please; an older woman dark faced, with a set scowl and malignant eyes, in deadly business earnest to please. Hard by, seedy corner men, with seamed faces, hang round hansoms, waiting by the restaurant doors for the few people yet to emerge.

A stout stolid foreigner who has had his fill of pleasure, walks leisurely homeward, smoking a

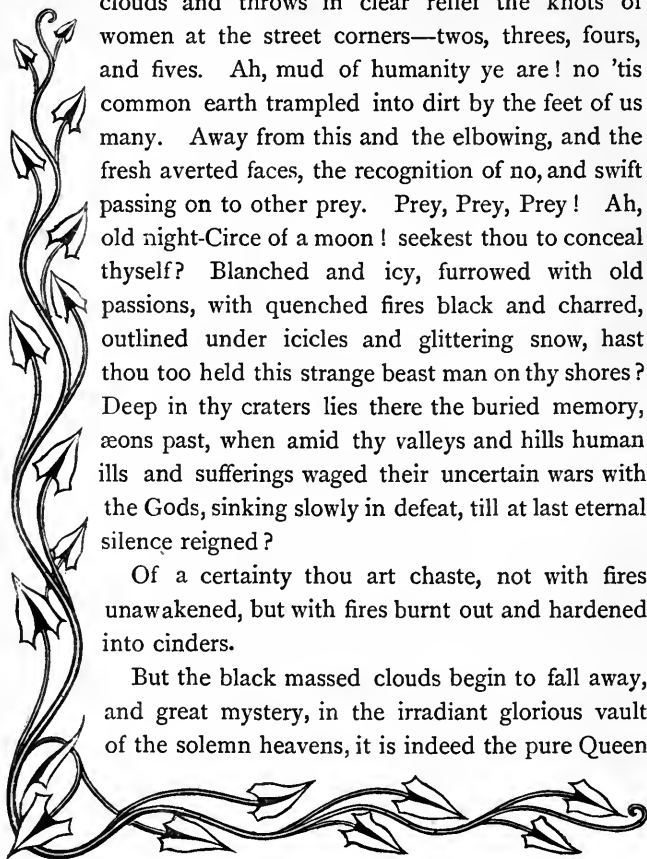


On the highway cigar, his small satisfied eyes resting on each group of women he passes.

The Moon emerges again from the oppressing clouds and throws in clear relief the knots of women at the street corners—twos, threes, fours, and fives. Ah, mud of humanity ye are! no 'tis common earth trampled into dirt by the feet of us many. Away from this and the elbowing, and the fresh averted faces, the recognition of no, and swift passing on to other prey. Prey, Prey, Prey! Ah, old night-Circe of a moon! seekest thou to conceal thyself? Blanched and icy, furrowed with old passions, with quenched fires black and charred, outlined under icicles and glittering snow, hast thou too held this strange beast man on thy shores? Deep in thy craters lies there the buried memory, æons past, when amid thy valleys and hills human ills and sufferings waged their uncertain wars with the Gods, sinking slowly in defeat, till at last eternal silence reigned?

Of a certainty thou art chaste, not with fires unawakened, but with fires burnt out and hardened into cinders.

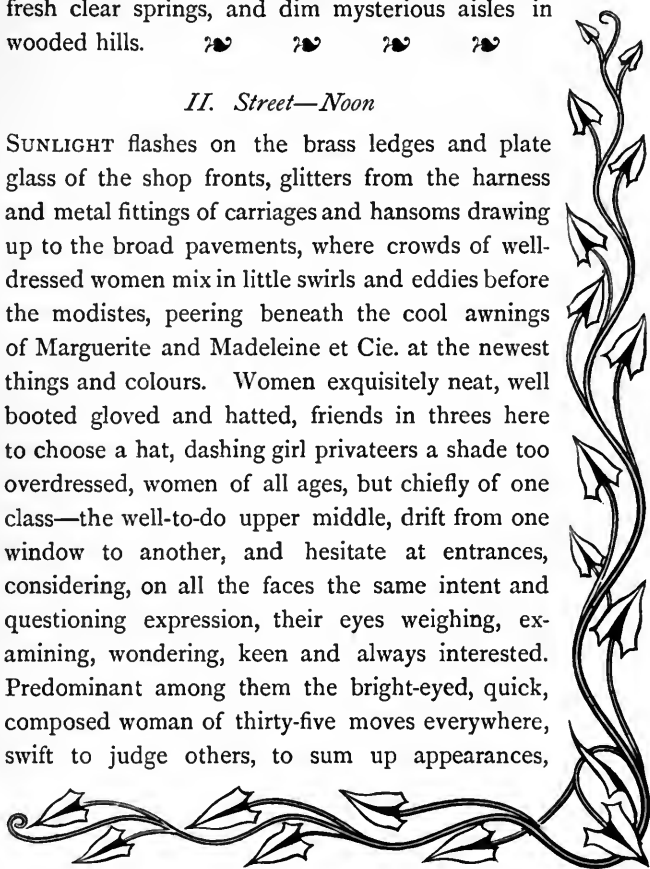
But the black massed clouds begin to fall away, and great mystery, in the irradiant glorious vault of the solemn heavens, it is indeed the pure Queen



of night that sails serene, it is indeed Diana looking down, as though she saw not sweltering city or men's soiled hearts, but Earth's green vales and fresh clear springs, and dim mysterious aisles in wooded hills. ? ? ? ? On the Highway

II. Street—Noon

SUNLIGHT flashes on the brass ledges and plate glass of the shop fronts, glitters from the harness and metal fittings of carriages and hansoms drawing up to the broad pavements, where crowds of well-dressed women mix in little swirls and eddies before the modistes, peering beneath the cool awnings of Marguerite and Madeleine et Cie. at the newest things and colours. Women exquisitely neat, well booted gloved and hatted, friends in threes here to choose a hat, dashing girl privateers a shade too overdressed, women of all ages, but chiefly of one class—the well-to-do upper middle, drift from one window to another, and hesitate at entrances, considering, on all the faces the same intent and questioning expression, their eyes weighing, examining, wondering, keen and always interested. Predominant among them the bright-eyed, quick, composed woman of thirty-five moves everywhere, swift to judge others, to sum up appearances,



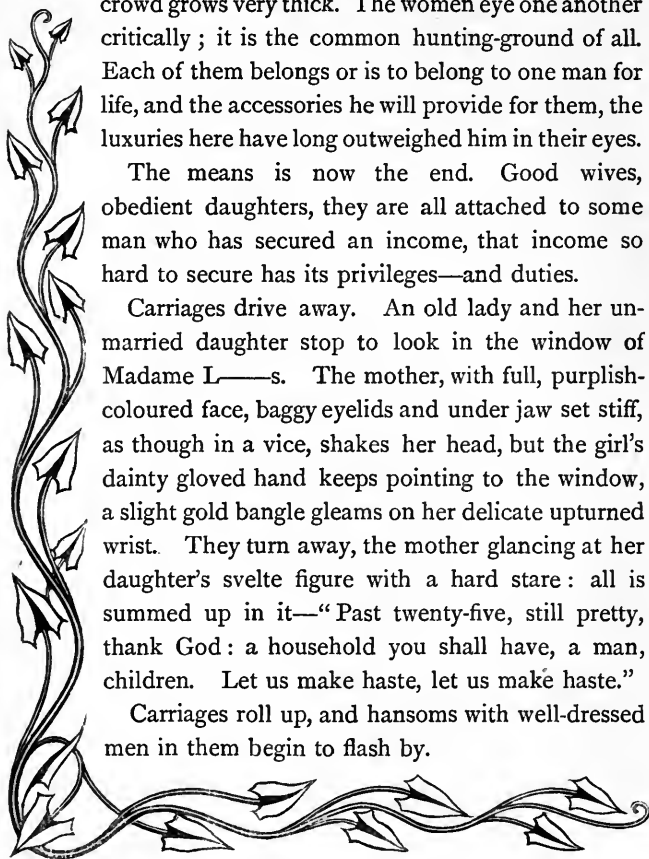
On the Highway knowing everybody's affairs, a wife, respectable, not altogether uncharitable, shallow-brained.

More carriages stop and ladies enter shops, the crowd grows very thick. The women eye one another critically ; it is the common hunting-ground of all. Each of them belongs or is to belong to one man for life, and the accessories he will provide for them, the luxuries here have long outweighed him in their eyes.

The means is now the end. Good wives, obedient daughters, they are all attached to some man who has secured an income, that income so hard to secure has its privileges—and duties.

Carriages drive away. An old lady and her unmarried daughter stop to look in the window of Madame L——s. The mother, with full, purplish-coloured face, baggy eyelids and under jaw set stiff, as though in a vice, shakes her head, but the girl's dainty gloved hand keeps pointing to the window, a slight gold bangle gleams on her delicate upturned wrist. They turn away, the mother glancing at her daughter's svelte figure with a hard stare : all is summed up in it—"Past twenty-five, still pretty, thank God : a household you shall have, a man, children. Let us make haste, let us make haste."

Carriages roll up, and hansoms with well-dressed men in them begin to flash by.



To Lucile, who did her Duty

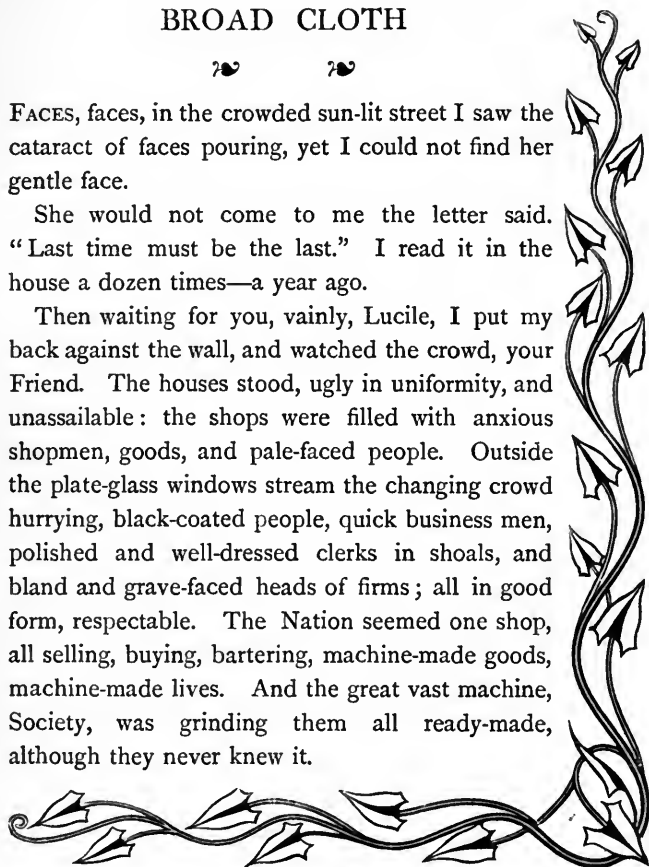
BROAD CLOTH



FACES, faces, in the crowded sun-lit street I saw the cataract of faces pouring, yet I could not find her gentle face.

She would not come to me the letter said. "Last time must be the last." I read it in the house a dozen times—a year ago.

Then waiting for you, vainly, Lucile, I put my back against the wall, and watched the crowd, your Friend. The houses stood, ugly in uniformity, and unassailable: the shops were filled with anxious shopmen, goods, and pale-faced people. Outside the plate-glass windows stream the changing crowd hurrying, black-coated people, quick business men, polished and well-dressed clerks in shoals, and bland and grave-faced heads of firms; all in good form, respectable. The Nation seemed one shop, all selling, buying, bartering, machine-made goods, machine-made lives. And the great vast machine, Society, was grinding them all ready-made, although they never knew it.

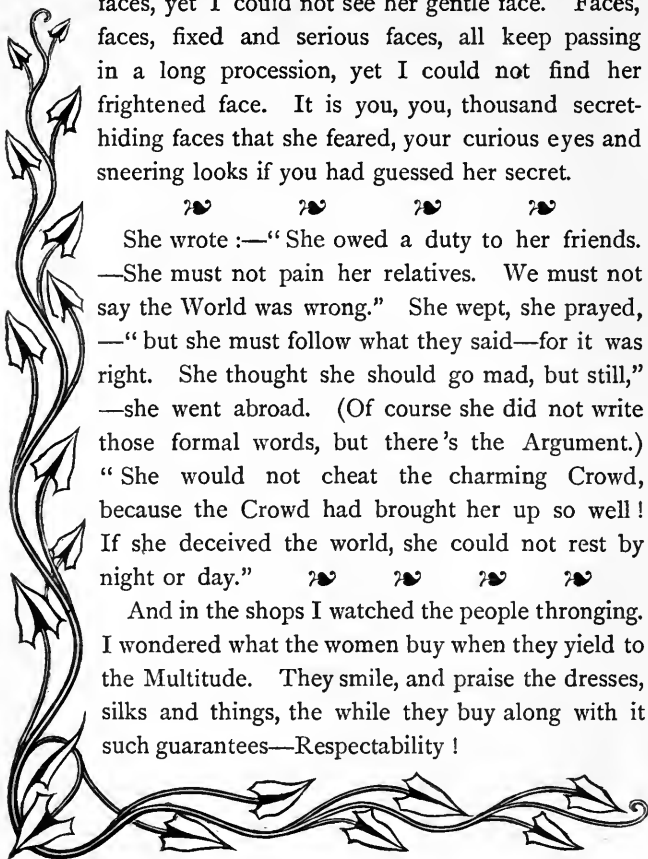


Broad
Cloth

And so, it is the Crowd, Lucile, that severed you from me. Yes, this great crowd stretching away between us. Faces, faces, everywhere I saw fresh faces, yet I could not see her gentle face. Faces, faces, fixed and serious faces, all keep passing in a long procession, yet I could not find her frightened face. It is you, you, thousand secret-hiding faces that she feared, your curious eyes and sneering looks if you had guessed her secret.

She wrote :—"She owed a duty to her friends. —She must not pain her relatives. We must not say the World was wrong." She wept, she prayed, —"but she must follow what they said—for it was right. She thought she should go mad, but still," —she went abroad. (Of course she did not write those formal words, but there's the Argument.) "She would not cheat the charming Crowd, because the Crowd had brought her up so well ! If she deceived the world, she could not rest by night or day."

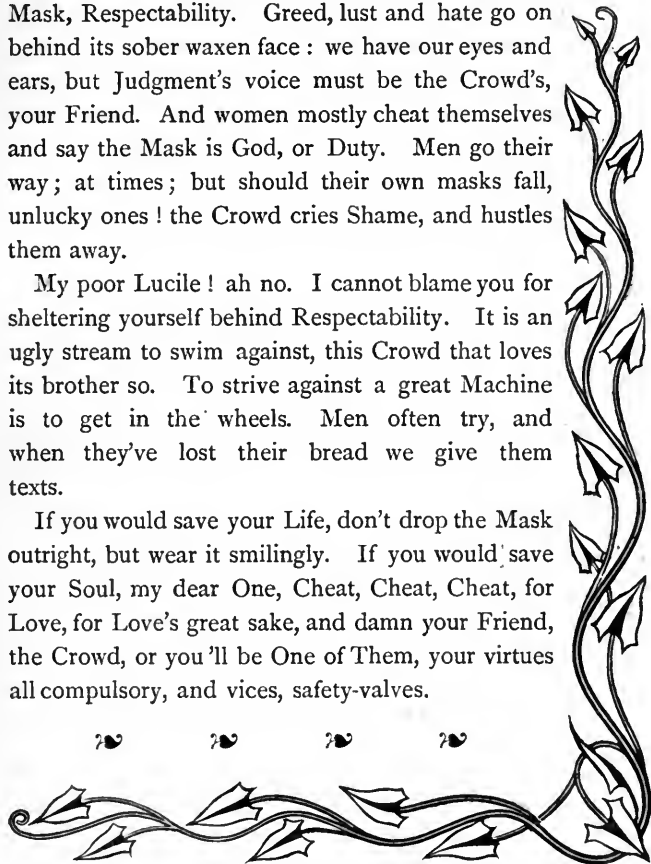
And in the shops I watched the people thronging. I wondered what the women buy when they yield to the Multitude. They smile, and praise the dresses, silks and things, the while they buy along with it such guarantees—Respectability !



Ah, poor Lucile, cannot you see the game these serious people play is but, Appearances : they win or lose their lives behind the huge drab-painted Mask, Respectability. Greed, lust and hate go on behind its sober waxen face : we have our eyes and ears, but Judgment's voice must be the Crowd's, your Friend. And women mostly cheat themselves and say the Mask is God, or Duty. Men go their way ; at times ; but should their own masks fall, unlucky ones ! the Crowd cries Shame, and hustles them away.

My poor Lucile ! ah no. I cannot blame you for sheltering yourself behind Respectability. It is an ugly stream to swim against, this Crowd that loves its brother so. To strive against a great Machine is to get in the wheels. Men often try, and when they've lost their bread we give them texts.

If you would save your Life, don't drop the Mask outright, but wear it smilingly. If you would save your Soul, my dear One, Cheat, Cheat, Cheat, for Love, for Love's great sake, and damn your Friend, the Crowd, or you'll be One of Them, your virtues all compulsory, and vices, safety-valves.



Broad
Cloth

Faces, faces, in the crowded sun-lit street I saw
fresh faces streaming, grave men, respectable, ah !
such sweet lives !—and yet I could not see her
gentle face.



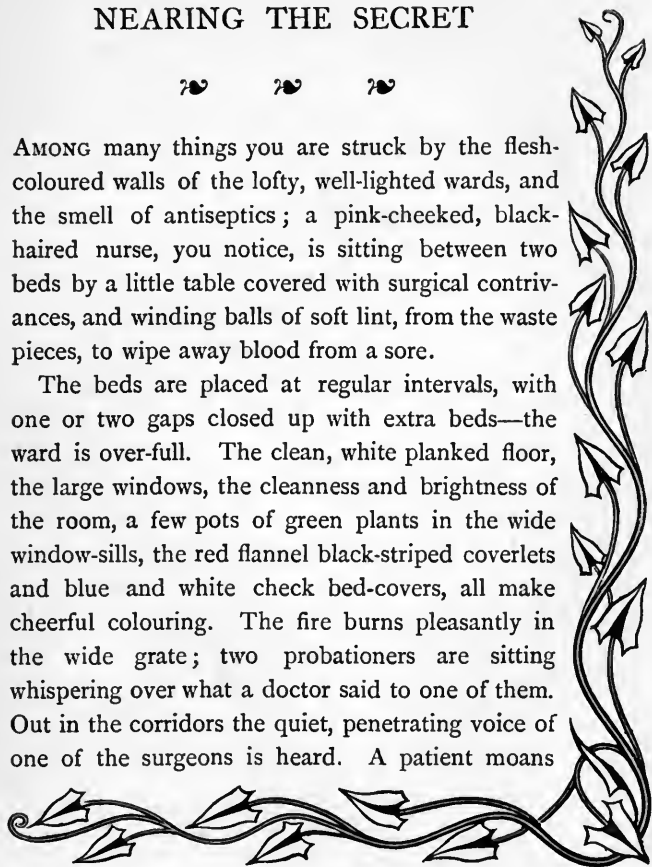
The Walls of another World

NEARING THE SECRET



AMONG many things you are struck by the flesh-coloured walls of the lofty, well-lighted wards, and the smell of antiseptics ; a pink-checked, black-haired nurse, you notice, is sitting between two beds by a little table covered with surgical contrivances, and winding balls of soft lint, from the waste pieces, to wipe away blood from a sore.

The beds are placed at regular intervals, with one or two gaps closed up with extra beds—the ward is over-full. The clean, white planked floor, the large windows, the cleanness and brightness of the room, a few pots of green plants in the wide window-sills, the red flannel black-striped coverlets and blue and white check bed-covers, all make cheerful colouring. The fire burns pleasantly in the wide grate ; two probationers are sitting whispering over what a doctor said to one of them. Out in the corridors the quiet, penetrating voice of one of the surgeons is heard. A patient moans

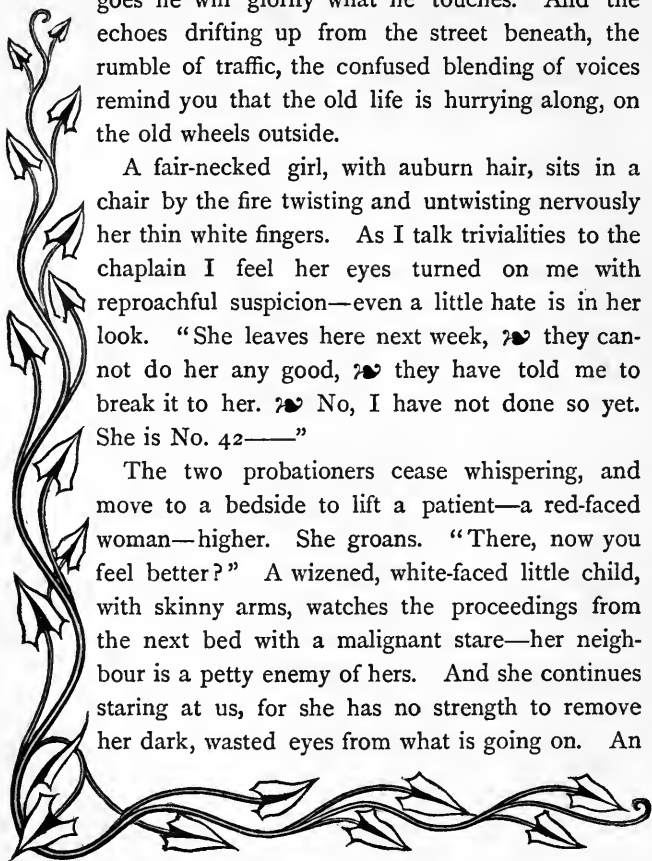


Hearing
the
Secret

slightly. But all else is silent. The afternoon sunshine makes bright patches on the floor, the sun is slipping slowly to the west, but before he goes he will glorify what he touches. And the echoes drifting up from the street beneath, the rumble of traffic, the confused blending of voices remind you that the old life is hurrying along, on the old wheels outside.

A fair-necked girl, with auburn hair, sits in a chair by the fire twisting and untwisting nervously her thin white fingers. As I talk trivialities to the chaplain I feel her eyes turned on me with reproachful suspicion—even a little hate is in her look. “She leaves here next week, ♡ they cannot do her any good, ♡ they have told me to break it to her. ♡ No, I have not done so yet. She is No. 42——”

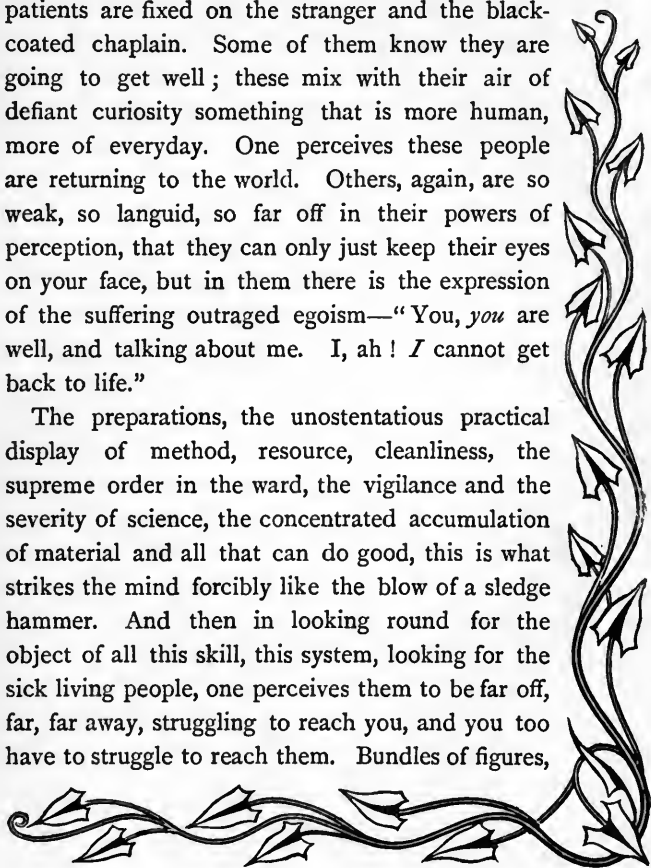
The two probationers cease whispering, and move to a bedside to lift a patient—a red-faced woman—higher. She groans. “There, now you feel better?” A wizened, white-faced little child, with skinny arms, watches the proceedings from the next bed with a malignant stare—her neighbour is a petty enemy of hers. And she continues staring at us, for she has no strength to remove her dark, wasted eyes from what is going on. An



insufferable air of languor prevails in the sick faces in this cheerful room. Everything, though real, is horribly unreal. One feels the eyes of all the patients are fixed on the stranger and the black-coated chaplain. Some of them know they are going to get well ; these mix with their air of defiant curiosity something that is more human, more of everyday. One perceives these people are returning to the world. Others, again, are so weak, so languid, so far off in their powers of perception, that they can only just keep their eyes on your face, but in them there is the expression of the suffering outraged egoism—"You, *you* are well, and talking about me. I, ah ! *I* cannot get back to life."

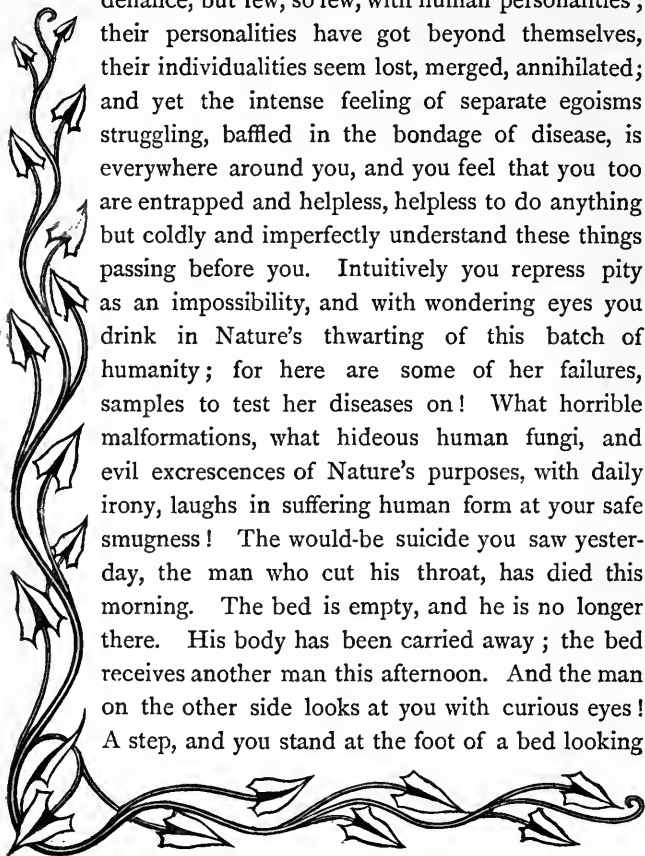
The preparations, the unostentatious practical display of method, resource, cleanliness, the supreme order in the ward, the vigilance and the severity of science, the concentrated accumulation of material and all that can do good, this is what strikes the mind forcibly like the blow of a sledge hammer. And then in looking round for the object of all this skill, this system, looking for the sick living people, one perceives them to be far off, far, far away, struggling to reach you, and you too have to struggle to reach them. Bundles of figures,

Hearing
the
Secret



Dearing
the
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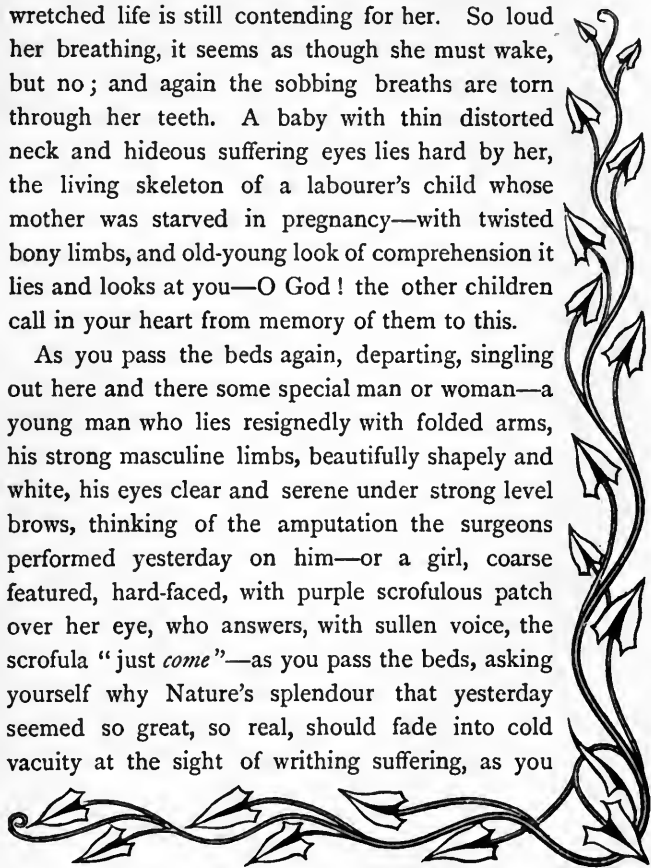
sleeping figures, figures with faces upturned and heads thrown back, others with staring eyes watching you from a mass of bed-clothes, others with defiance, but few, so few, with human personalities; their personalities have got beyond themselves, their individualities seem lost, merged, annihilated; and yet the intense feeling of separate egoisms struggling, baffled in the bondage of disease, is everywhere around you, and you feel that you too are entrapped and helpless, helpless to do anything but coldly and imperfectly understand these things passing before you. Intuitively you repress pity as an impossibility, and with wondering eyes you drink in Nature's thwarting of this batch of humanity; for here are some of her failures, samples to test her diseases on! What horrible malformations, what hideous human fungi, and evil excrescences of Nature's purposes, with daily irony, laughs in suffering human form at your safe smugness! The would-be suicide you saw yesterday, the man who cut his throat, has died this morning. The bed is empty, and he is no longer there. His body has been carried away; the bed receives another man this afternoon. And the man on the other side looks at you with curious eyes! A step, and you stand at the foot of a bed looking



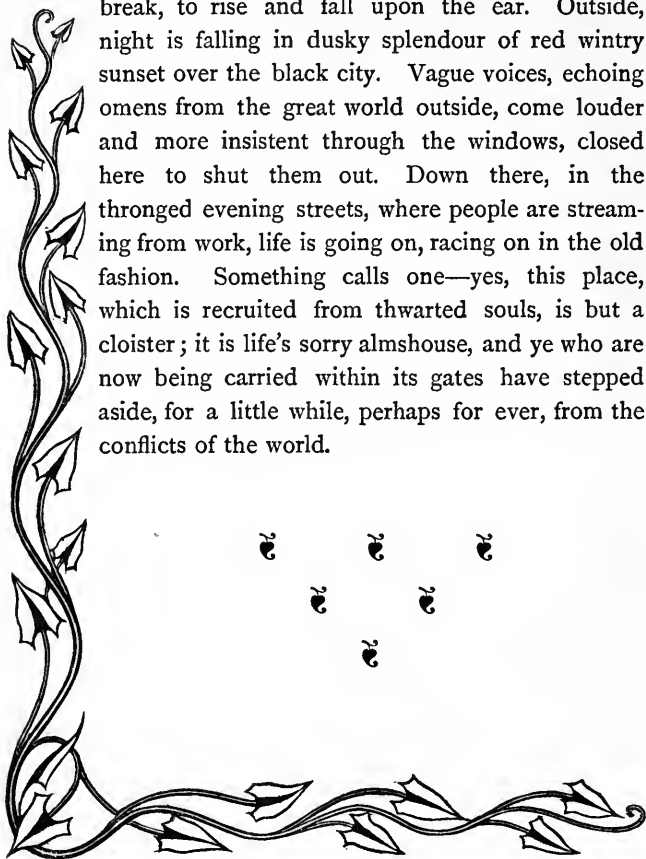
at a woman who, the doctors think, must die. With ashy sweating face she lies, her chest bare, her breath coming in loudly rising choking gasps. Her wretched life is still contending for her. So loud her breathing, it seems as though she must wake, but no; and again the sobbing breaths are torn through her teeth. A baby with thin distorted neck and hideous suffering eyes lies hard by her, the living skeleton of a labourer's child whose mother was starved in pregnancy—with twisted bony limbs, and old-young look of comprehension it lies and looks at you—O God! the other children call in your heart from memory of them to this.

As you pass the beds again, departing, singling out here and there some special man or woman—a young man who lies resignedly with folded arms, his strong masculine limbs, beautifully shapely and white, his eyes clear and serene under strong level brows, thinking of the amputation the surgeons performed yesterday on him—or a girl, coarse featured, hard-faced, with purple scrofulous patch over her eye, who answers, with sullen voice, the scrofula “just *come*”—as you pass the beds, asking yourself why Nature's splendour that yesterday seemed so great, so real, should fade into cold vacuity at the sight of writhing suffering, as you

Bearing
the
Secret



**Bearing
the
Secret** pass the beds of old women and men and children—the recovering, the fallen, the slain—a strange murmur, the roar of mighty London, begins to break, to rise and fall upon the ear. Outside, night is falling in dusky splendour of red wintry sunset over the black city. Vague voices, echoing omens from the great world outside, come louder and more insistent through the windows, closed here to shut them out. Down there, in the thronged evening streets, where people are streaming from work, life is going on, racing on in the old fashion. Something calls one—yes, this place, which is recruited from thwarted souls, is but a cloister; it is life's sorry almshouse, and ye who are now being carried within its gates have stepped aside, for a little while, perhaps for ever, from the conflicts of the world.



To a Girl working in the Crowd

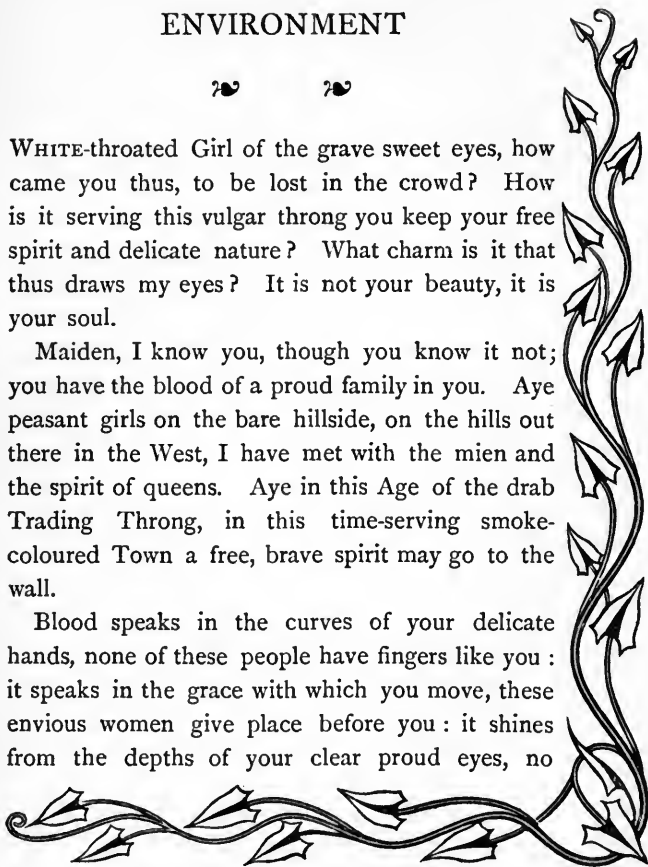
ENVIRONMENT



WHITE-throated Girl of the grave sweet eyes, how came you thus, to be lost in the crowd? How is it serving this vulgar throng you keep your free spirit and delicate nature? What charm is it that thus draws my eyes? It is not your beauty, it is your soul.

Maiden, I know you, though you know it not; you have the blood of a proud family in you. Aye peasant girls on the bare hillside, on the hills out there in the West, I have met with the mien and the spirit of queens. Aye in this Age of the drab Trading Throng, in this time-serving smoke-coloured Town a free, brave spirit may go to the wall.

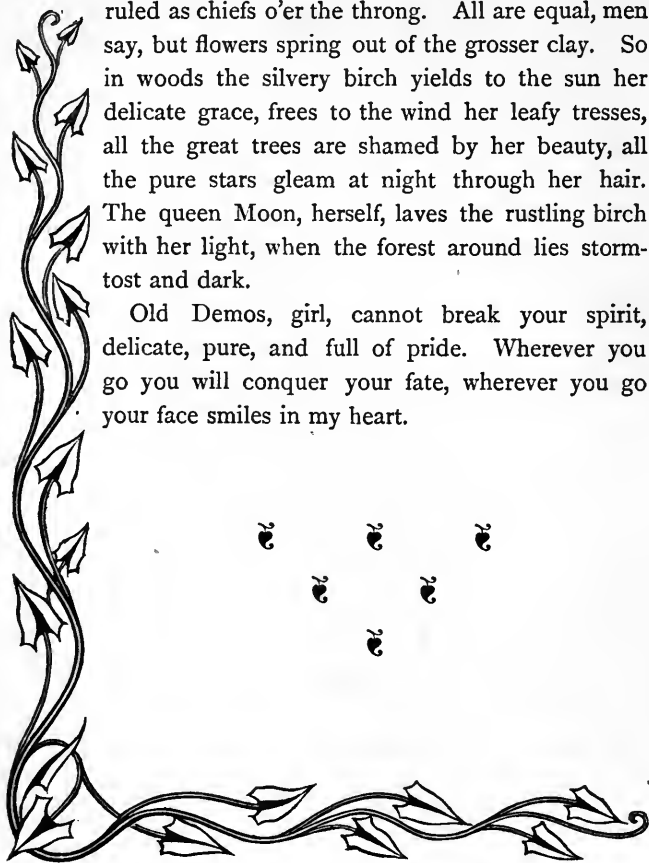
Blood speaks in the curves of your delicate hands, none of these people have fingers like you : it speaks in the grace with which you move, these envious women give place before you : it shines from the depths of your clear proud eyes, no



Environ-
ment

insolent word can humiliate you. It calls in the wandering thoughts on your face, when your dreams are of things, aye ages ago, when your forefathers ruled as chiefs o'er the throng. All are equal, men say, but flowers spring out of the grosser clay. So in woods the silvery birch yields to the sun her delicate grace, frees to the wind her leafy tresses, all the great trees are shamed by her beauty, all the pure stars gleam at night through her hair. The queen Moon, herself, laves the rustling birch with her light, when the forest around lies storm-tost and dark.

Old Demos, girl, cannot break your spirit, delicate, pure, and full of pride. Wherever you go you will conquer your fate, wherever you go your face smiles in my heart.

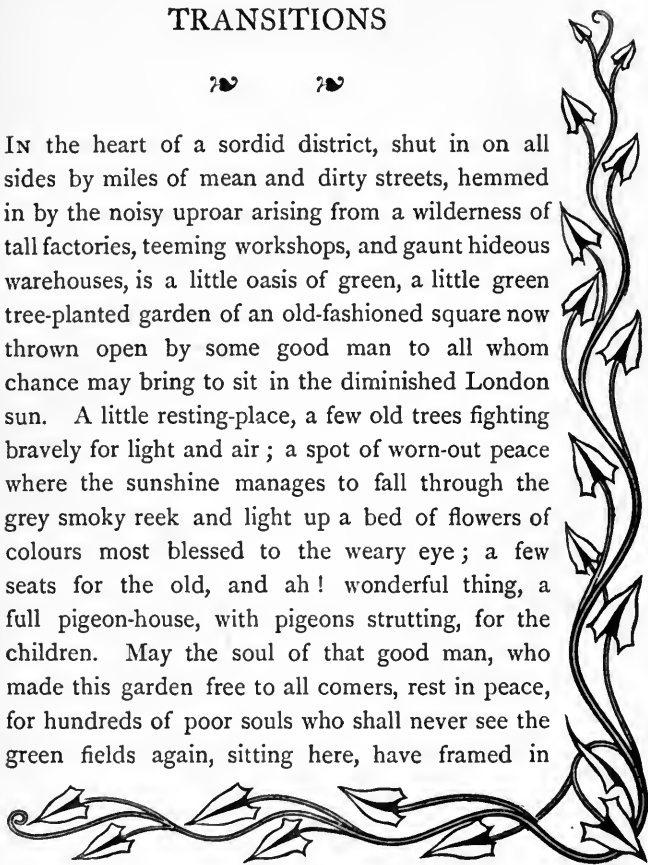


Spring in a London Square

TRANSITIONS



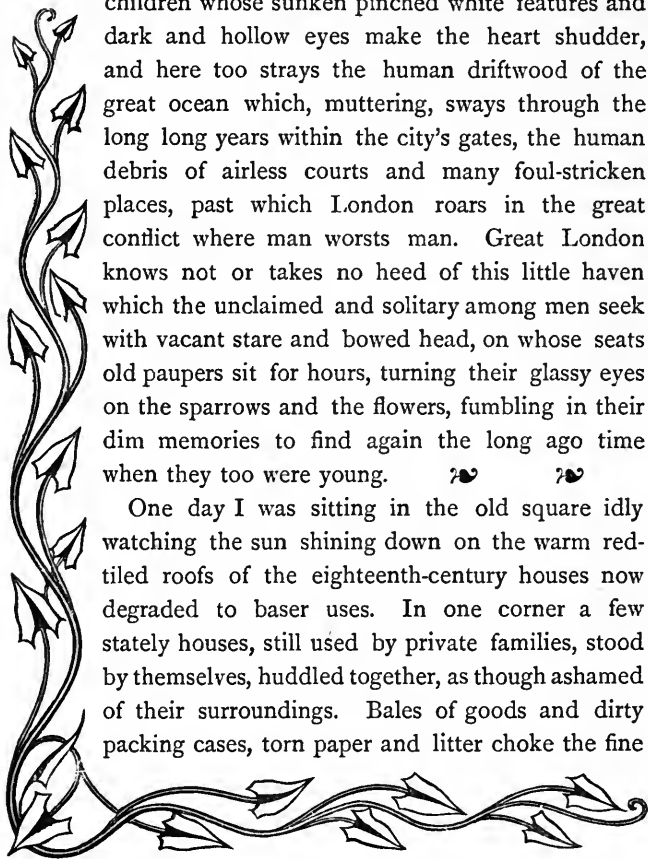
IN the heart of a sordid district, shut in on all sides by miles of mean and dirty streets, hemmed in by the noisy uproar arising from a wilderness of tall factories, teeming workshops, and gaunt hideous warehouses, is a little oasis of green, a little green tree-planted garden of an old-fashioned square now thrown open by some good man to all whom chance may bring to sit in the diminished London sun. A little resting-place, a few old trees fighting bravely for light and air ; a spot of worn-out peace where the sunshine manages to fall through the grey smoky reek and light up a bed of flowers of colours most blessed to the weary eye ; a few seats for the old, and ah ! wonderful thing, a full pigeon-house, with pigeons strutting, for the children. May the soul of that good man, who made this garden free to all comers, rest in peace, for hundreds of poor souls who shall never see the green fields again, sitting here, have framed in



Transi-
tions

their hearts a struggling bewildered prayer. Here comes sickly humanity, the aged, the failures and many men thrown out of work, here too come little children whose sunken pinched white features and dark and hollow eyes make the heart shudder, and here too strays the human driftwood of the great ocean which, muttering, sways through the long long years within the city's gates, the human debris of airless courts and many foul-stricken places, past which London roars in the great conflict where man worsts man. Great London knows not or takes no heed of this little haven which the unclaimed and solitary among men seek with vacant stare and bowed head, on whose seats old paupers sit for hours, turning their glassy eyes on the sparrows and the flowers, fumbling in their dim memories to find again the long ago time when they too were young. ♪ ♪

One day I was sitting in the old square idly watching the sun shining down on the warm red-tiled roofs of the eighteenth-century houses now degraded to baser uses. In one corner a few stately houses, still used by private families, stood by themselves, huddled together, as though ashamed of their surroundings. Bales of goods and dirty packing cases, torn paper and litter choke the fine



old doorways, the windows were defaced with commercial inscriptions, the yellow wainscoting of the stairs was tarnished with dirty elbow marks, the very stones of this dignified street seemed defaced by sordid trade. As I sat in the garden, I noticed that opposite one of these doors a black funeral car and three melancholy coaches had drawn up.

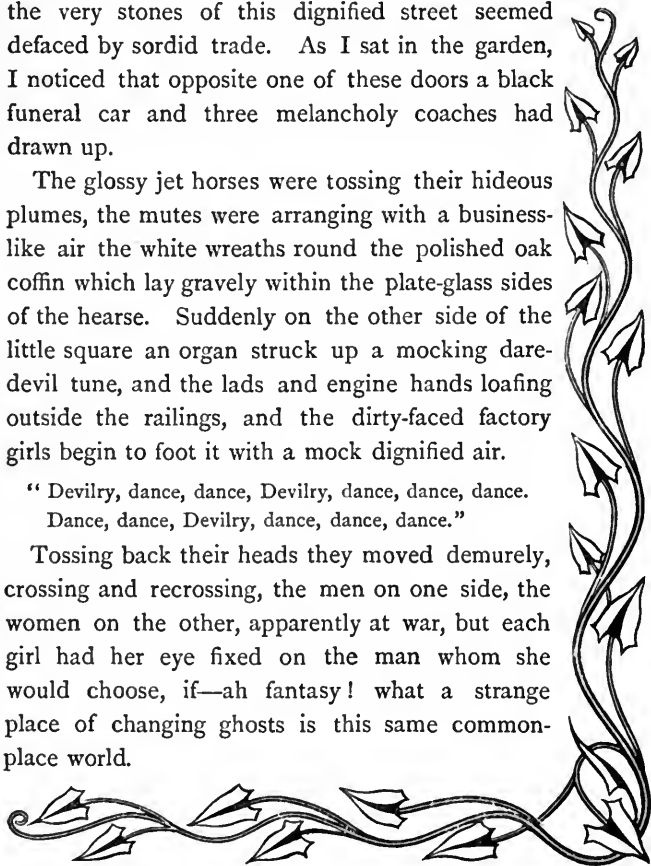
The glossy jet horses were tossing their hideous plumes, the mutes were arranging with a business-like air the white wreaths round the polished oak coffin which lay gravely within the plate-glass sides of the hearse. Suddenly on the other side of the little square an organ struck up a mocking dare-devil tune, and the lads and engine hands loafing outside the railings, and the dirty-faced factory girls begin to foot it with a mock dignified air.

"Devilry, dance, dance, Devilry, dance, dance, dance.

Dance, dance, Devilry, dance, dance, dance."

Tossing back their heads they moved demurely, crossing and recrossing, the men on one side, the women on the other, apparently at war, but each girl had her eye fixed on the man whom she would choose, if—ah fantasy! what a strange place of changing ghosts is this same commonplace world.

Transi-
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Transi-
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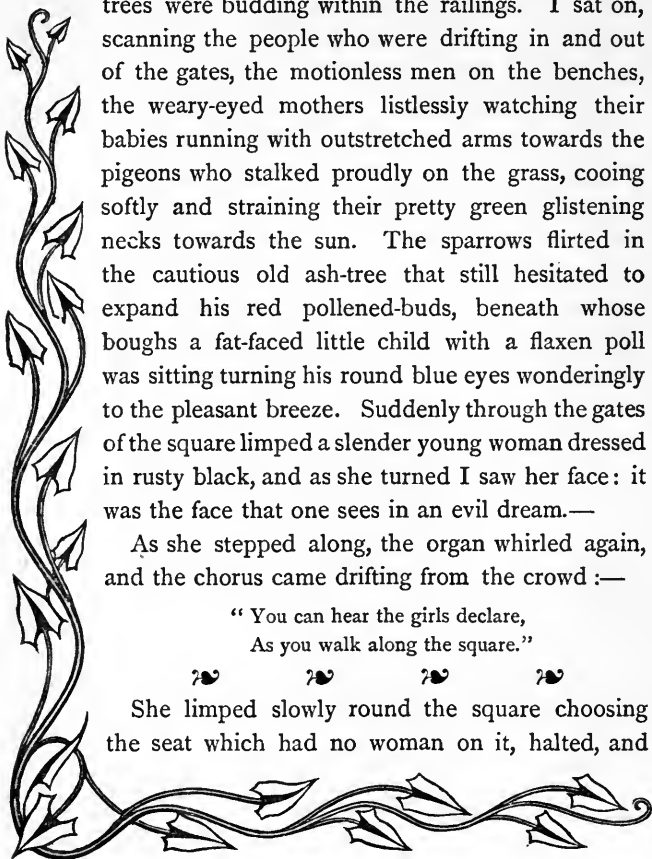
Noisy vans kept rattling in and out of the square, yet all this invasion of reality could not break the peace of the little enchanted spot of turf where trees were budding within the railings. I sat on, scanning the people who were drifting in and out of the gates, the motionless men on the benches, the weary-eyed mothers listlessly watching their babies running with outstretched arms towards the pigeons who stalked proudly on the grass, cooing softly and straining their pretty green glistening necks towards the sun. The sparrows flirted in the cautious old ash-tree that still hesitated to expand his red pollened-buds, beneath whose boughs a fat-faced little child with a flaxen poll was sitting turning his round blue eyes wonderingly to the pleasant breeze. Suddenly through the gates of the square limped a slender young woman dressed in rusty black, and as she turned I saw her face: it was the face that one sees in an evil dream.—

As she stepped along, the organ whirled again, and the chorus came drifting from the crowd:—

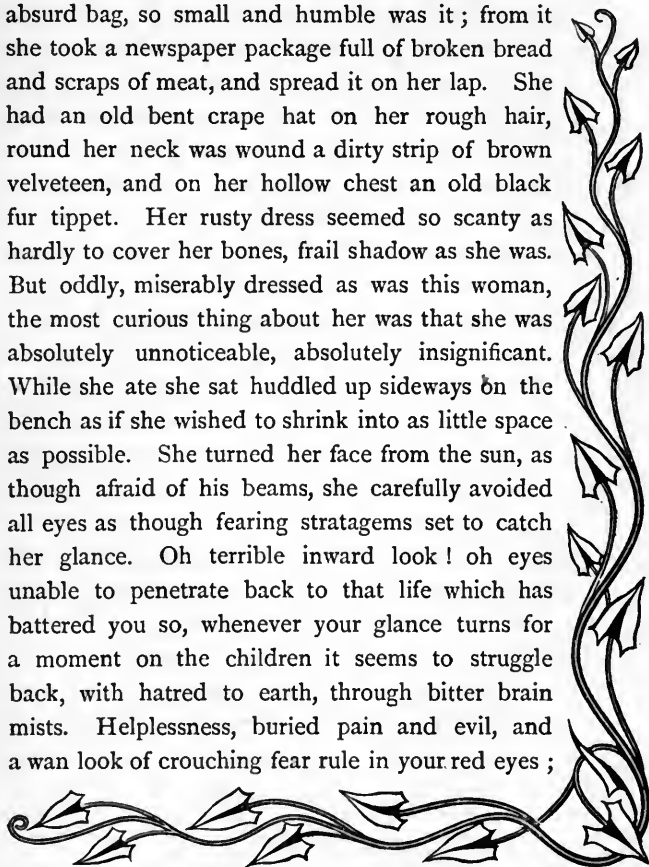
“ You can hear the girls declare,
As you walk along the square.”



She limped slowly round the square choosing the seat which had no woman on it, halted, and



sat down close to where I was sitting. In her dirty red-knotted fingers she carried a rough stitched bag made out of an old waterproof, an absurd bag, so small and humble was it ; from it she took a newspaper package full of broken bread and scraps of meat, and spread it on her lap. She had an old bent crape hat on her rough hair, round her neck was wound a dirty strip of brown velveteen, and on her hollow chest an old black fur tippet. Her rusty dress seemed so scanty as hardly to cover her bones, frail shadow as she was. But oddly, miserably dressed as was this woman, the most curious thing about her was that she was absolutely unnoticeable, absolutely insignificant. While she ate she sat huddled up sideways on the bench as if she wished to shrink into as little space as possible. She turned her face from the sun, as though afraid of his beams, she carefully avoided all eyes as though fearing stratagems set to catch her glance. Oh terrible inward look ! oh eyes unable to penetrate back to that life which has battered you so, whenever your glance turns for a moment on the children it seems to struggle back, with hatred to earth, through bitter brain mists. Helplessness, buried pain and evil, and a wan look of crouching fear rule in your red eyes ;

Transi-
tions

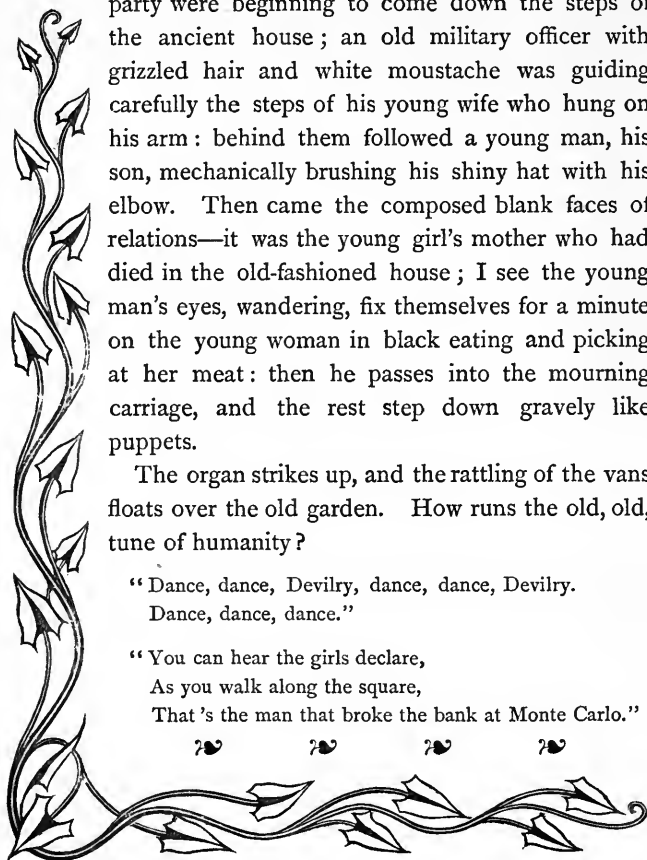
Transi-
tions

yet there is a look of something of beauty, almost a sweetness lingering in the lines of your face. ♪ When I looked up again I saw that the funeral party were beginning to come down the steps of the ancient house ; an old military officer with grizzled hair and white moustache was guiding carefully the steps of his young wife who hung on his arm : behind them followed a young man, his son, mechanically brushing his shiny hat with his elbow. Then came the composed blank faces of relations—it was the young girl's mother who had died in the old-fashioned house ; I see the young man's eyes, wandering, fix themselves for a minute on the young woman in black eating and picking at her meat : then he passes into the mourning carriage, and the rest step down gravely like puppets.

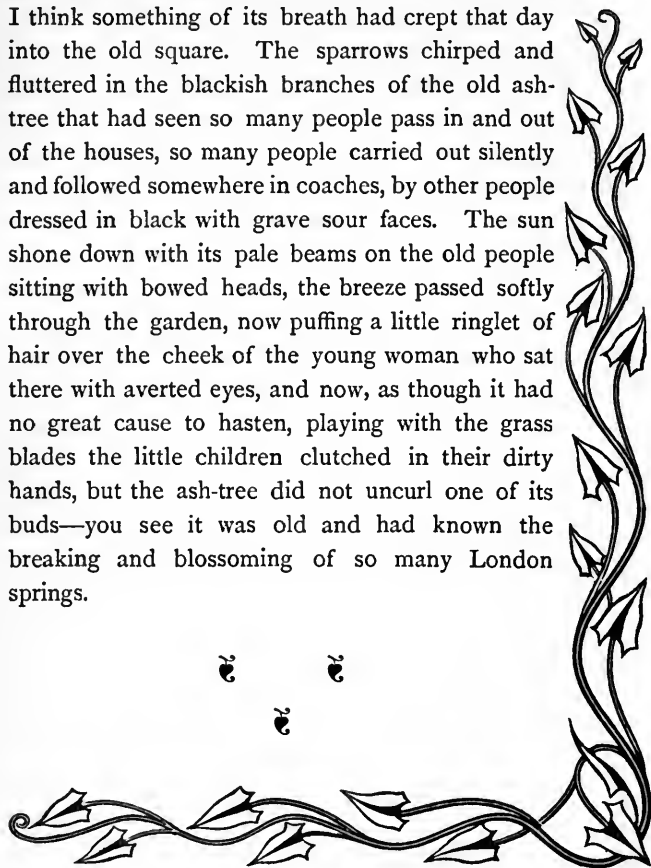
The organ strikes up, and the rattling of the vans floats over the old garden. How runs the old, old, tune of humanity ?

“Dance, dance, Devilry, dance, dance, Devilry.
Dance, dance, dance.”

“You can hear the girls declare,
As you walk along the square,
That 's the man that broke the bank at Monte Carlo.”




They say in London that the spring has begun to blossom and break out there in the wide countryside, in the English lanes and fields. And indeed, I think something of its breath had crept that day into the old square. The sparrows chirped and fluttered in the blackish branches of the old ash-tree that had seen so many people pass in and out of the houses, so many people carried out silently and followed somewhere in coaches, by other people dressed in black with grave sour faces. The sun shone down with its pale beams on the old people sitting with bowed heads, the breeze passed softly through the garden, now puffing a little ringlet of hair over the cheek of the young woman who sat there with averted eyes, and now, as though it had no great cause to hasten, playing with the grass blades the little children clutched in their dirty hands, but the ash-tree did not uncurl one of its buds—you see it was old and had known the breaking and blossoming of so many London springs.



In the Grey World of Work

SACRED REALITY

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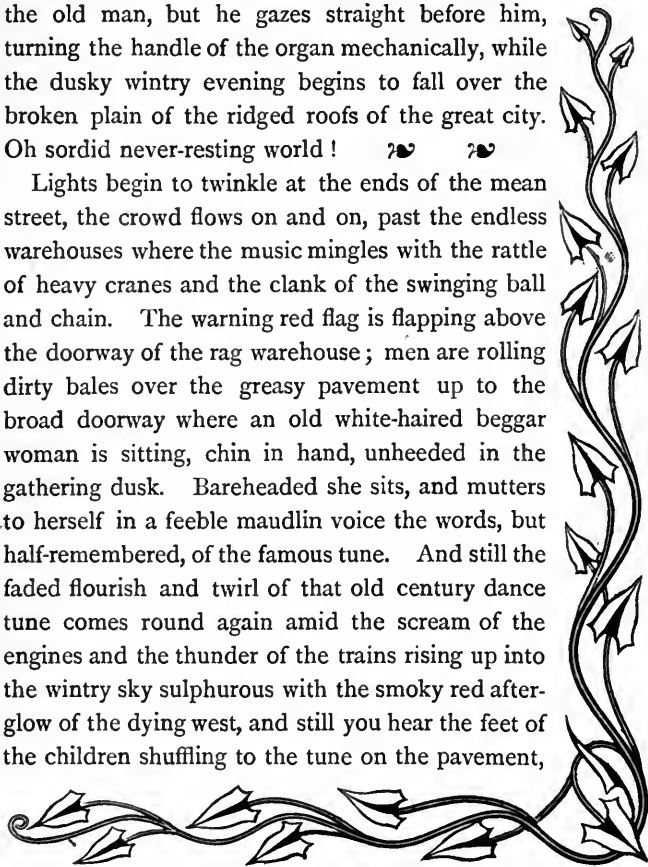
AMID the rattle of traffic in the dirty East-end street, amid the thunder of trains rolling over the great viaduct's rusty girders above, muffled by the grinding roar of a world of seamy work where wearily men and women pass on beneath the cold grey sky, rises a feeble organ's old world dance tune, racked out by the worn mechanism of whirling wheels. ? ? ? ? ?

Standing bare-headed under the grey wintry sky, with feet in the black snowy slush of the roadway, staring with old age's eyes at the rough timber hoarding plastered with flaming raw advertisements, the organ-grinder does not see the black crowds thronging past him, crowds of hurrying factory workers, men elbowing shawled women, lads, hoyden girls, children, grimy men with bundles, all slipping and jostling along the muddy pavement ; profiles of the faces of workers, anxious, grey, insatiable faces get outlined against the hoarding,

swept on, and carried out of sight by fresh seas of wan sickly faces ; many eyes are turned from the crowd towards the music and the wrinkled face of the old man, but he gazes straight before him, turning the handle of the organ mechanically, while the dusky wintry evening begins to fall over the broken plain of the ridged roofs of the great city. Oh sordid never-resting world !

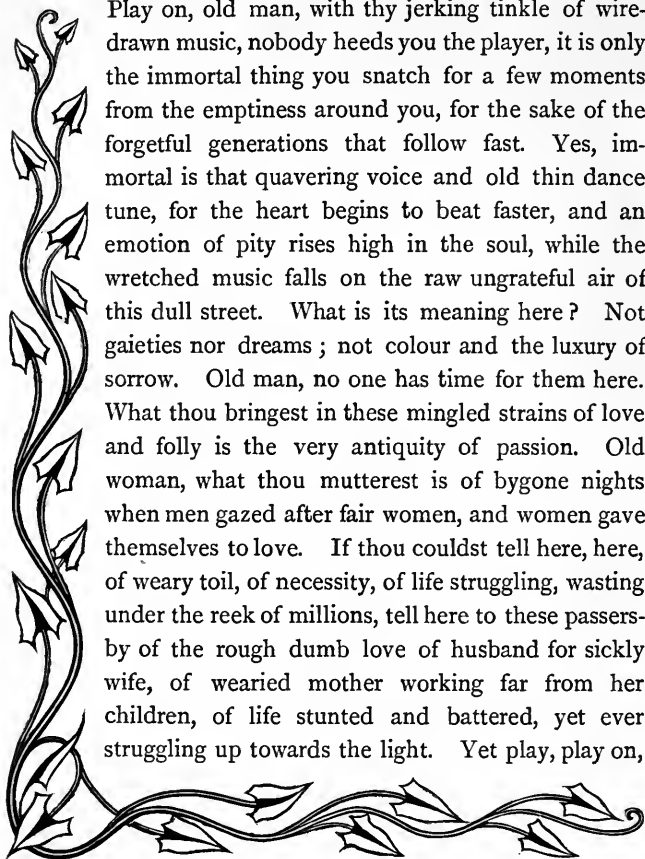
Sacred
Reality

Lights begin to twinkle at the ends of the mean street, the crowd flows on and on, past the endless warehouses where the music mingles with the rattle of heavy cranes and the clank of the swinging ball and chain. The warning red flag is flapping above the doorway of the rag warehouse ; men are rolling dirty bales over the greasy pavement up to the broad doorway where an old white-haired beggar woman is sitting, chin in hand, unheeded in the gathering dusk. Bareheaded she sits, and mutters to herself in a feeble maudlin voice the words, but half-remembered, of the famous tune. And still the faded flourish and twirl of that old century dance tune comes round again amid the scream of the engines and the thunder of the trains rising up into the wintry sky sulphurous with the smoky red after-glow of the dying west, and still you hear the feet of the children shuffling to the tune on the pavement,



Sacred
Reality

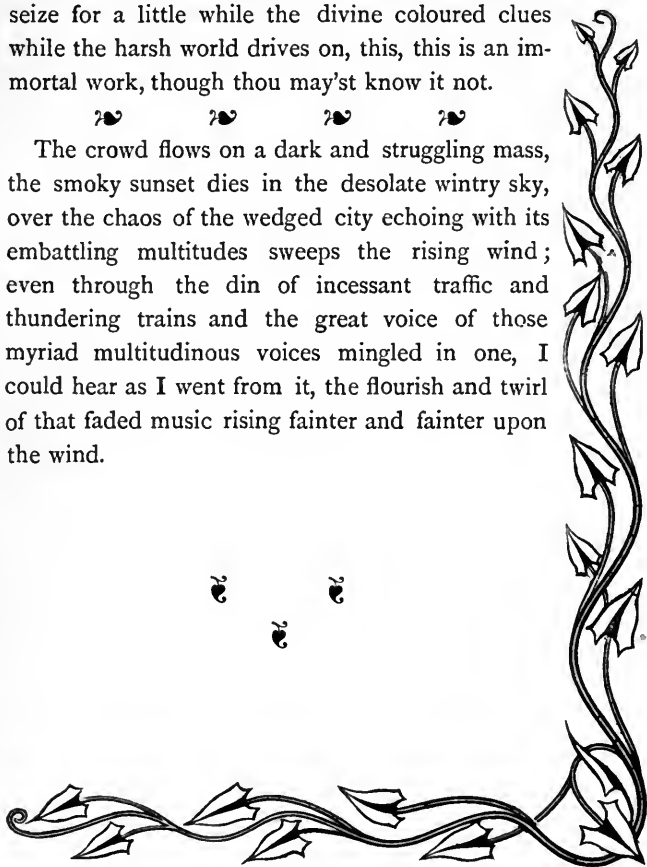
the hiccups and oaths of the drunken men outside the public-house, and the loud rising rattle of traffic along the sordid, hopeless street. Yes, play on ! Play on, old man, with thy jerking tinkle of wire-drawn music, nobody heeds you the player, it is only the immortal thing you snatch for a few moments from the emptiness around you, for the sake of the forgetful generations that follow fast. Yes, immortal is that quavering voice and old thin dance tune, for the heart begins to beat faster, and an emotion of pity rises high in the soul, while the wretched music falls on the raw ungrateful air of this dull street. What is its meaning here ? Not gaieties nor dreams ; not colour and the luxury of sorrow. Old man, no one has time for them here. What thou bringest in these mingled strains of love and folly is the very antiquity of passion. Old woman, what thou mutterest is of bygone nights when men gazed after fair women, and women gave themselves to love. If thou couldst tell here, here, of weary toil, of necessity, of life struggling, wasting under the reek of millions, tell here to these passers-by of the rough dumb love of husband for sickly wife, of wearied mother working far from her children, of life stunted and battered, yet ever struggling up towards the light. Yet play, play on,



old man, for the breath of an eternal something
lingers, still lingers, in this old, old tune. To
separate the grey strands of life one by one, to
seize for a little while the divine coloured clues
while the harsh world drives on, this, this is an im-
mortal work, though thou may'st know it not.


Sacred
Reality

The crowd flows on a dark and struggling mass,
the smoky sunset dies in the desolate wintry sky,
over the chaos of the wedged city echoing with its
embattling multitudes sweeps the rising wind ;
even through the din of incessant traffic and
thundering trains and the great voice of those
myriad multitudinous voices mingled in one, I
could hear as I went from it, the flourish and twirl
of that faded music rising fainter and fainter upon
the wind.



To Lucile reforming the World

TO AN IDEALIST

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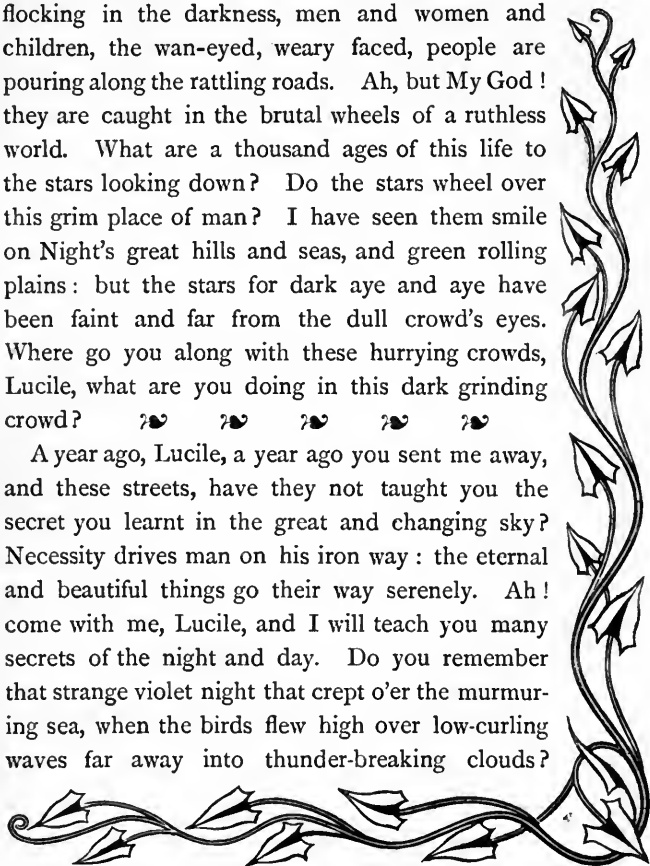
THE lamps are gleaming along the dark city, Lucile ; the dusky night is falling over this wintry town ; the maelstrom of life is whirling the crowds beneath me, harsh voices are echoing in the dark street's turmoil, the lights are gleaming on hungered and restless faces, the hungry Darkness is seizing and dragging me down. ? ? ?

Down there in the crowded streets, Lucile, the old comedy is going on that men call Life. Here in this dark room, I am lying, O Girl, with only my sad thoughts of thee ; and the sullen grinding roar of London throbbing in my ears. A year has passed, Lucile, a year has passed, since you sent me away, and this clashing life is hurrying faster and faster along the weary road. A dull red Moon is hanging there over the houses, like a child's lantern in the foggy night. What is it doing in this grey-seamed town ? The pent-up air is hot with the steaming breath of these people,

unclean flesh has touched and tainted each stone of these ancient streets. The lamps are gleaming on the muddy stones, Lucile, the people are flocking in the darkness, men and women and children, the wan-eyed, weary faced, people are pouring along the rattling roads. Ah, but My God ! they are caught in the brutal wheels of a ruthless world. What are a thousand ages of this life to the stars looking down ? Do the stars wheel over this grim place of man ? I have seen them smile on Night's great hills and seas, and green rolling plains : but the stars for dark aye and aye have been faint and far from the dull crowd's eyes. Where go you along with these hurrying crowds, Lucile, what are you doing in this dark grinding crowd ?

To an Idealist

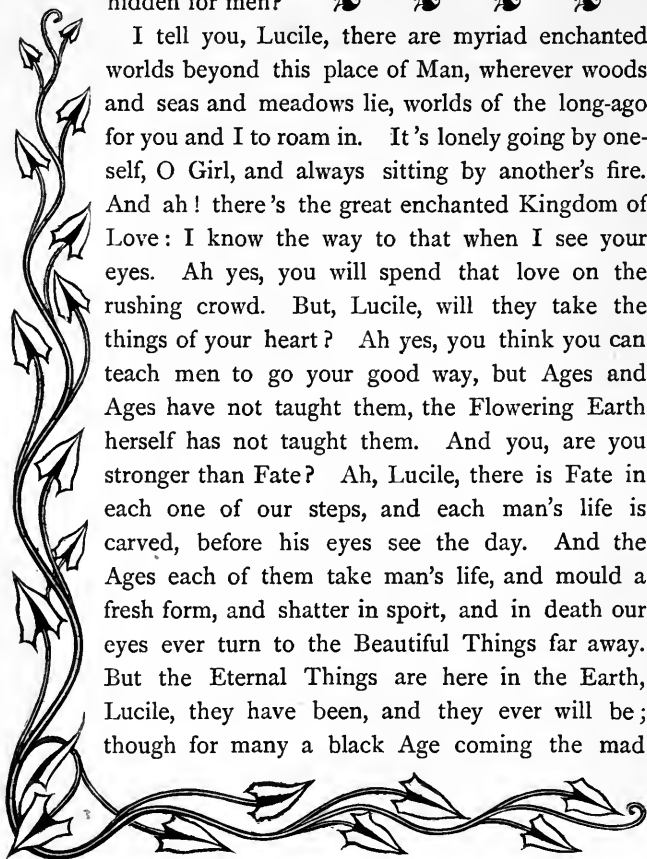
A year ago, Lucile, a year ago you sent me away, and these streets, have they not taught you the secret you learnt in the great and changing sky ? Necessity drives man on his iron way : the eternal and beautiful things go their way serenely. Ah ! come with me, Lucile, and I will teach you many secrets of the night and day. Do you remember that strange violet night that crept o'er the murmuring sea, when the birds flew high over low-curling waves far away into thunder-breaking clouds ?



To an
Idealist

Do you remember that eve of peace in the dusk
of the forest grey, when the wind swayed far far
above us, and sang deep deep of the joys that lie
hidden for men? ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪

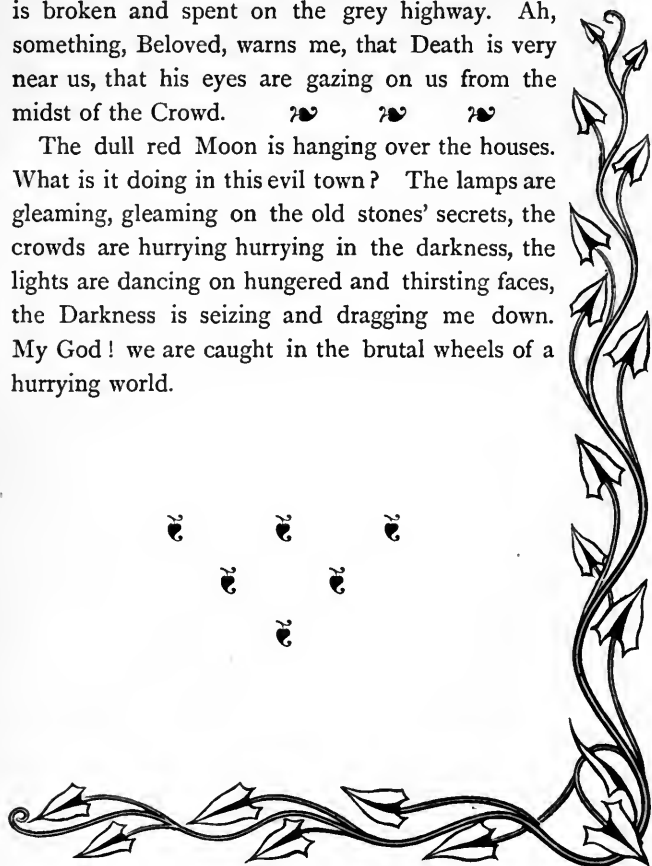
I tell you, Lucile, there are myriad enchanted
worlds beyond this place of Man, wherever woods
and seas and meadows lie, worlds of the long-ago
for you and I to roam in. It's lonely going by one-
self, O Girl, and always sitting by another's fire.
And ah! there's the great enchanted Kingdom of
Love: I know the way to that when I see your
eyes. Ah yes, you will spend that love on the
rushing crowd. But, Lucile, will they take the
things of your heart? Ah yes, you think you can
teach men to go your good way, but Ages and
Ages have not taught them, the Flowering Earth
herself has not taught them. And you, are you
stronger than Fate? Ah, Lucile, there is Fate in
each one of our steps, and each man's life is
carved, before his eyes see the day. And the
Ages each of them take man's life, and mould a
fresh form, and shatter in sport, and in death our
eyes ever turn to the Beautiful Things far away.
But the Eternal Things are here in the Earth,
Lucile, they have been, and they ever will be;
though for many a black Age coming the mad



world shall pass the Eternal Things by, and drive man faster and faster along Fate's roaring track. Ah, Lucile, come with me before your life is broken and spent on the grey highway. Ah, something, Beloved, warns me, that Death is very near us, that his eyes are gazing on us from the midst of the Crowd. ? ? ?


The dull red Moon is hanging over the houses. What is it doing in this evil town? The lamps are gleaming, gleaming on the old stones' secrets, the crowds are hurrying hurrying in the darkness, the lights are dancing on hungered and thirsting faces, the Darkness is seizing and dragging me down. My God! we are caught in the brutal wheels of a hurrying world.

To an Idealist




The Torrent of Flame

REVOLT



THE dark Earth rocked in silence : a hushed uneasiness filled the darkness, as of some terrible truth to be revealed. A savage desire had filled me that night and its evil ferment was sweet, as, so Hafiz said, are the dark roses that thrust themselves in thick clusters before all who descend the path to Hell. That night I had tasted that voluptuousness of life which only two passions can give, the divine passionate love which suddenly, like the sunlit sea, lies revealed stretching to eternity before the amazed soul, and its rival which, rising like a whirlwind from the depths of the spirit, reveals venomous abysses within shuddering abysses, all-destructive and unfathomable, unfathomable for in this dissolution of the soul are revealed the terrible ever-battling forces of Evil out of which light and life and beauty, and the Universe itself, spring.

This savage passion had triumphed and I lay



faint and captive, seeking the oblivion of sleep, ~~Rebolt~~ desperately murmuring to myself that these terrible abysses would be bridged by God, and seeing in the darkness, when I closed my eyes, a precipice, and at its foot the tiny figure of a man who vainly would have climbed to where I stood. And looking down the abyss I saw it was myself vainly struggling to reach myself. Then as sleep would not come I arose and looked out across the blackness of the night at the sleeping city. The millions slept, and but a hushed and weary sound told that the wheel of life was still revolving. "Oh that this wheel could eternally be stayed," I cried in my soul, "Have not all these millions been triumphed over by Thee? Let Life cease in the world, O God, for we are weary."

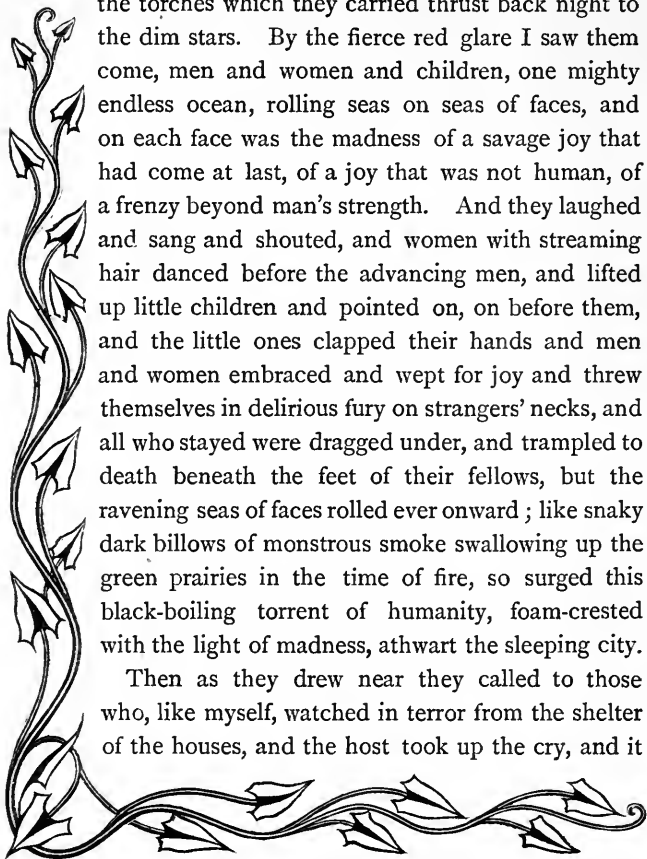


Then as if in answer to my cry, I heard a mighty rushing sound, a sound as though all the armies that ever marched to slaughter were marching in the dread night across the world. All my blood thrilled: a terrible expectation cast its huge net over me. Terror himself has come, I thought, it is the king Terror himself, and I waited. The sound grew louder and louder, and smoky, pitchy lights flared on the horizon, and men's voices, women's



Rebust voices, children's voices all in one mighty outburst rose on the night-wind : it was the voice of all Humanity. On, on they came, and the light of the torches which they carried thrust back night to the dim stars. By the fierce red glare I saw them come, men and women and children, one mighty endless ocean, rolling seas on seas of faces, and on each face was the madness of a savage joy that had come at last, of a joy that was not human, of a frenzy beyond man's strength. And they laughed and sang and shouted, and women with streaming hair danced before the advancing men, and lifted up little children and pointed on, on before them, and the little ones clapped their hands and men and women embraced and wept for joy and threw themselves in delirious fury on strangers' necks, and all who stayed were dragged under, and trampled to death beneath the feet of their fellows, but the ravening seas of faces rolled ever onward ; like snaky dark billows of monstrous smoke swallowing up the green prairies in the time of fire, so surged this black-boiling torrent of humanity, foam-crested with the light of madness, athwart the sleeping city.

Then as they drew near they called to those who, like myself, watched in terror from the shelter of the houses, and the host took up the cry, and it

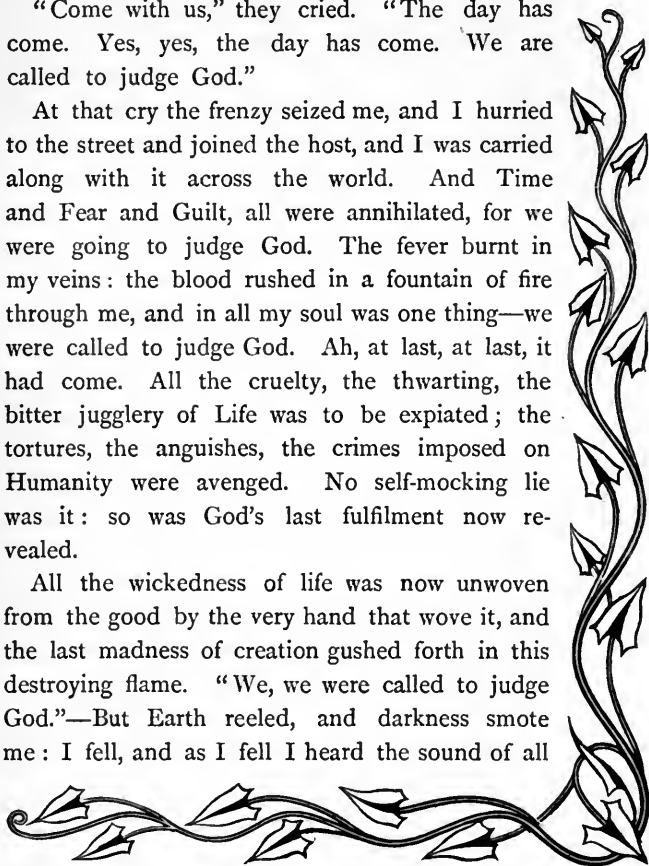


echoed back to the girdling horizon where fiercer lights flared, for the millions were marching, marching, called to judge God.

"Come with us," they cried. "The day has come. Yes, yes, the day has come. We are called to judge God."

At that cry the frenzy seized me, and I hurried to the street and joined the host, and I was carried along with it across the world. And Time and Fear and Guilt, all were annihilated, for we were going to judge God. The fever burnt in my veins: the blood rushed in a fountain of fire through me, and in all my soul was one thing—we were called to judge God. Ah, at last, at last, it had come. All the cruelty, the thwarting, the bitter jugglery of Life was to be expiated; the tortures, the anguishes, the crimes imposed on Humanity were avenged. No self-mocking lie was it: so was God's last fulfilment now revealed.

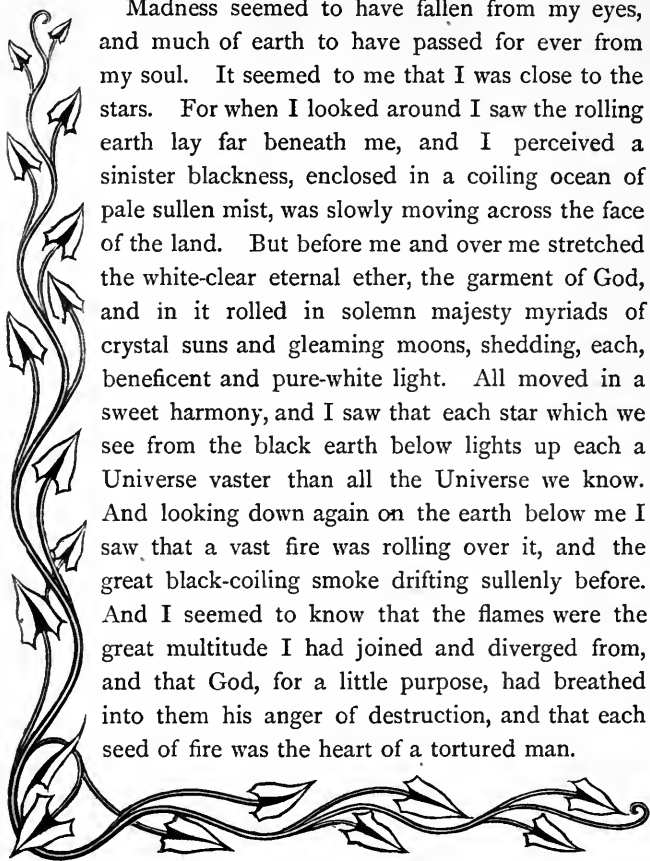
All the wickedness of life was now unwoven from the good by the very hand that wove it, and the last madness of creation gushed forth in this destroying flame. "We, we were called to judge God."—But Earth reeled, and darkness smote me: I fell, and as I fell I heard the sound of all



Rebolt Earth's cataracts, rushing and thundering, rushing to a fiery destruction.—



Madness seemed to have fallen from my eyes, and much of earth to have passed for ever from my soul. It seemed to me that I was close to the stars. For when I looked around I saw the rolling earth lay far beneath me, and I perceived a sinister blackness, enclosed in a coiling ocean of pale sullen mist, was slowly moving across the face of the land. But before me and over me stretched the white-clear eternal ether, the garment of God, and in it rolled in solemn majesty myriads of crystal suns and gleaming moons, shedding, each, beneficent and pure-white light. All moved in a sweet harmony, and I saw that each star which we see from the black earth below lights up each a Universe vaster than all the Universe we know. And looking down again on the earth below me I saw that a vast fire was rolling over it, and the great black-coiling smoke drifting sullenly before. And I seemed to know that the flames were the great multitude I had joined and diverged from, and that God, for a little purpose, had breathed into them his anger of destruction, and that each seed of fire was the heart of a tortured man.



The Imaged World

ACQUIESCENCE



WHILE a man who sits in a dusky corner can see many of the faces in a firelit room, the man who sits in the glaring light often can only see that there are dusky corners. And thus it is with the reflections cast by the actual bread-getting world in the glass of imagination. The Imaged world is thronged with faces, Images, fugitives from life, all re-enacting the impulses, the passions that once burned in action, or fell straightway into the dust. These Images are subject to no restrictions, they seek no thrusting back into life, and to apply to them law of any kind is like throwing stones into a pool: leave them then to enact in the shadowy land the drama that they form.

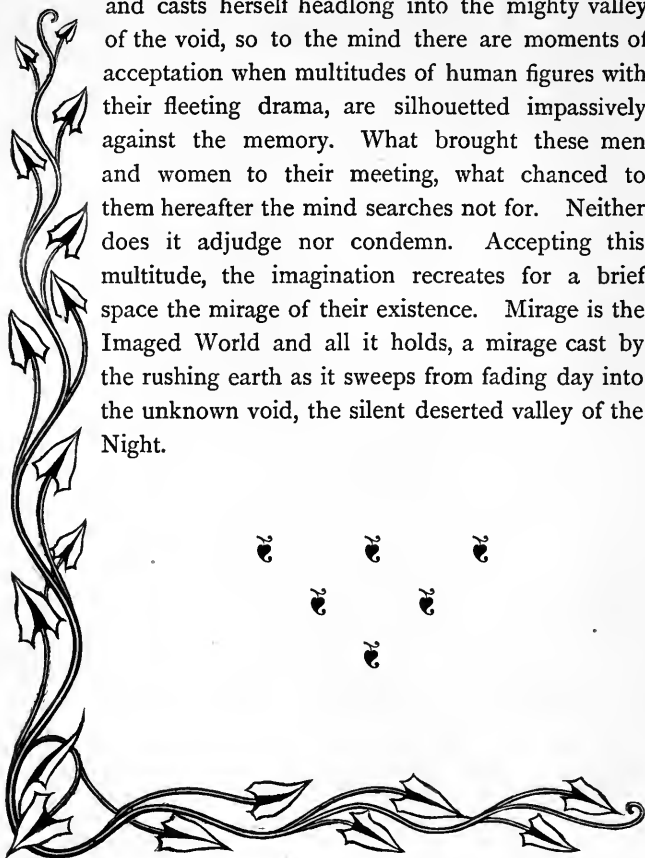


As to a man when the sun has set in fire, watching from some quiet hillside the black rim of the flying world bearing fast into the darkness the burden of another day, there comes a moment of



Acquies-
cence

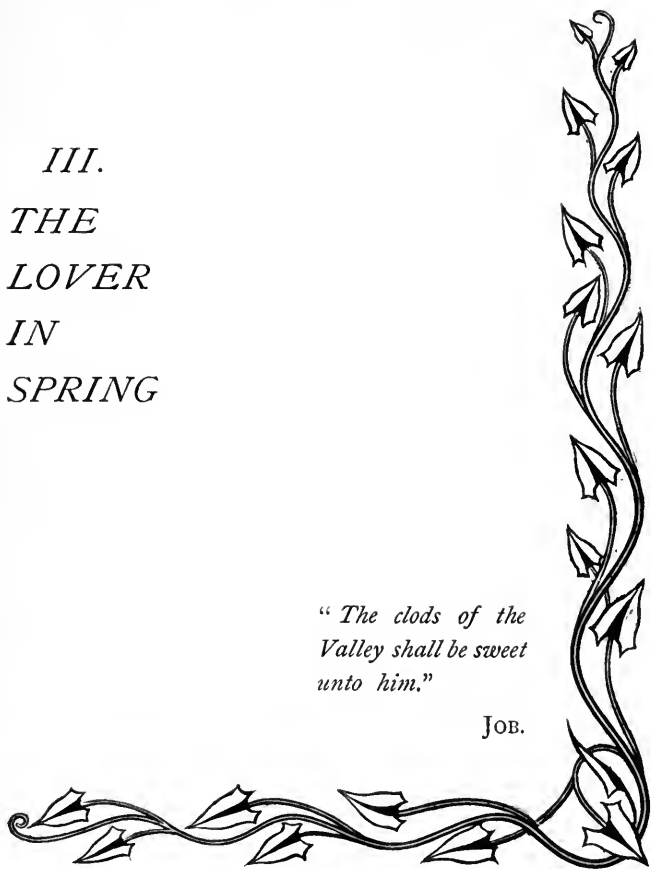
solemn hush running up from the faint horizon of quivering light, a moment when Earth herself seems to linger ere she leaves the Sun her Lord, and casts herself headlong into the mighty valley of the void, so to the mind there are moments of acceptance when multitudes of human figures with their fleeting drama, are silhouetted impassively against the memory. What brought these men and women to their meeting, what chanced to them hereafter the mind searches not for. Neither does it adjudge nor condemn. Accepting this multitude, the imagination recreates for a brief space the mirage of their existence. Mirage is the Imaged World and all it holds, a mirage cast by the rushing earth as it sweeps from fading day into the unknown void, the silent deserted valley of the Night.



III.
THE
LOVER
IN
SPRING

*"The clods of the
Valley shall be sweet
unto him."*

JOB.





The Sowing of Stars over Earth

FATE'S VOICE

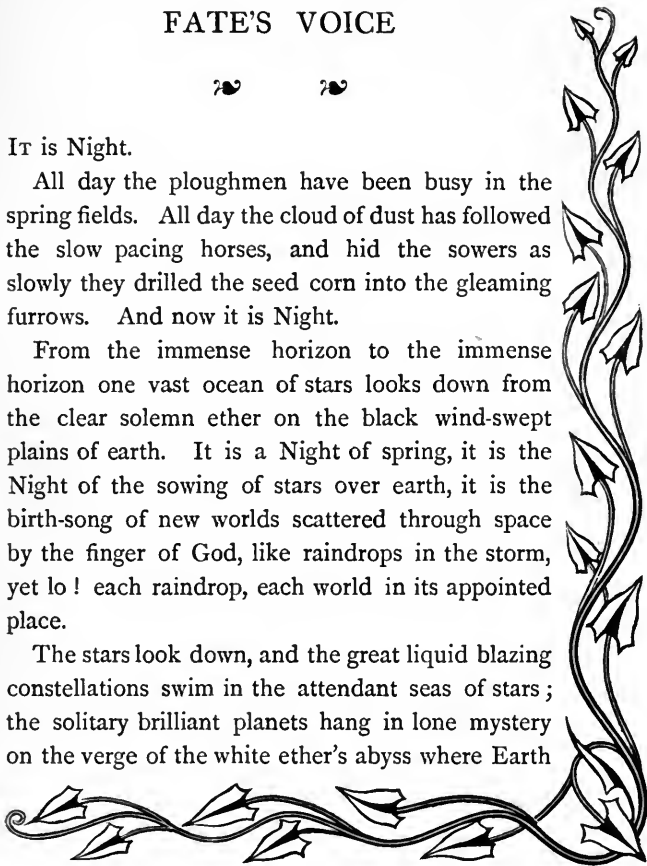


It is Night.

All day the ploughmen have been busy in the spring fields. All day the cloud of dust has followed the slow pacing horses, and hid the sowers as slowly they drilled the seed corn into the gleaming furrows. And now it is Night.

From the immense horizon to the immense horizon one vast ocean of stars looks down from the clear solemn ether on the black wind-swept plains of earth. It is a Night of spring, it is the Night of the sowing of stars over earth, it is the birth-song of new worlds scattered through space by the finger of God, like raindrops in the storm, yet lo ! each raindrop, each world in its appointed place.

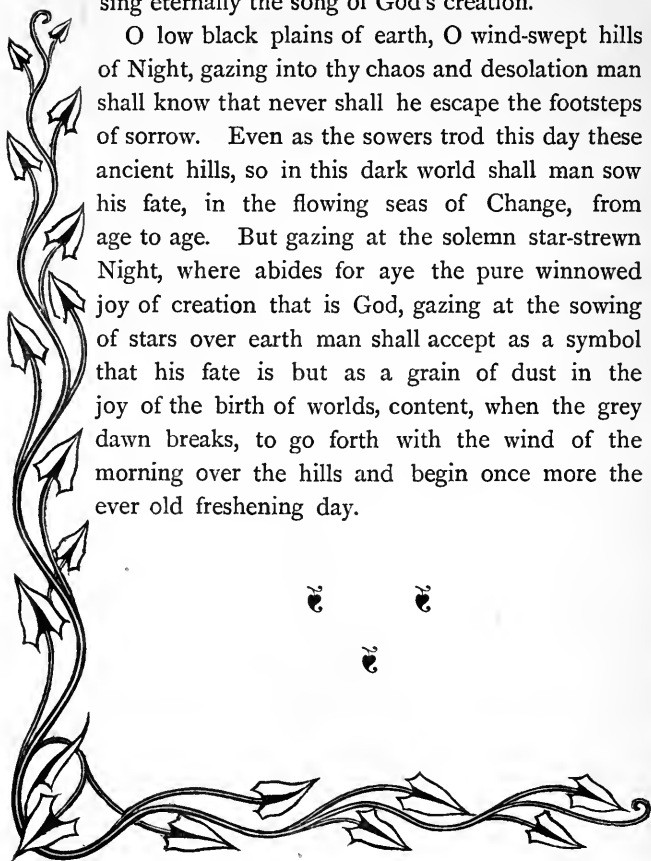
The stars look down, and the great liquid blazing constellations swim in the attendant seas of stars ; the solitary brilliant planets hang in lone mystery on the verge of the white ether's abyss where Earth

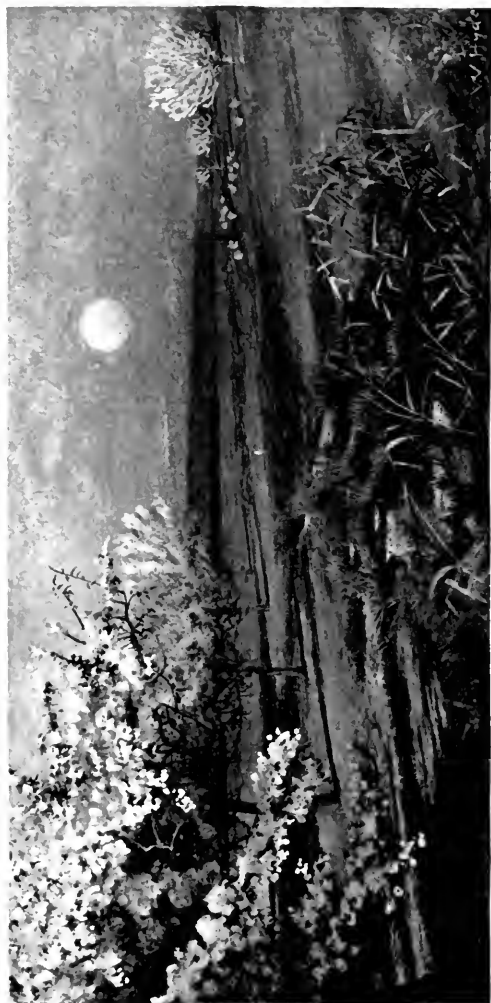


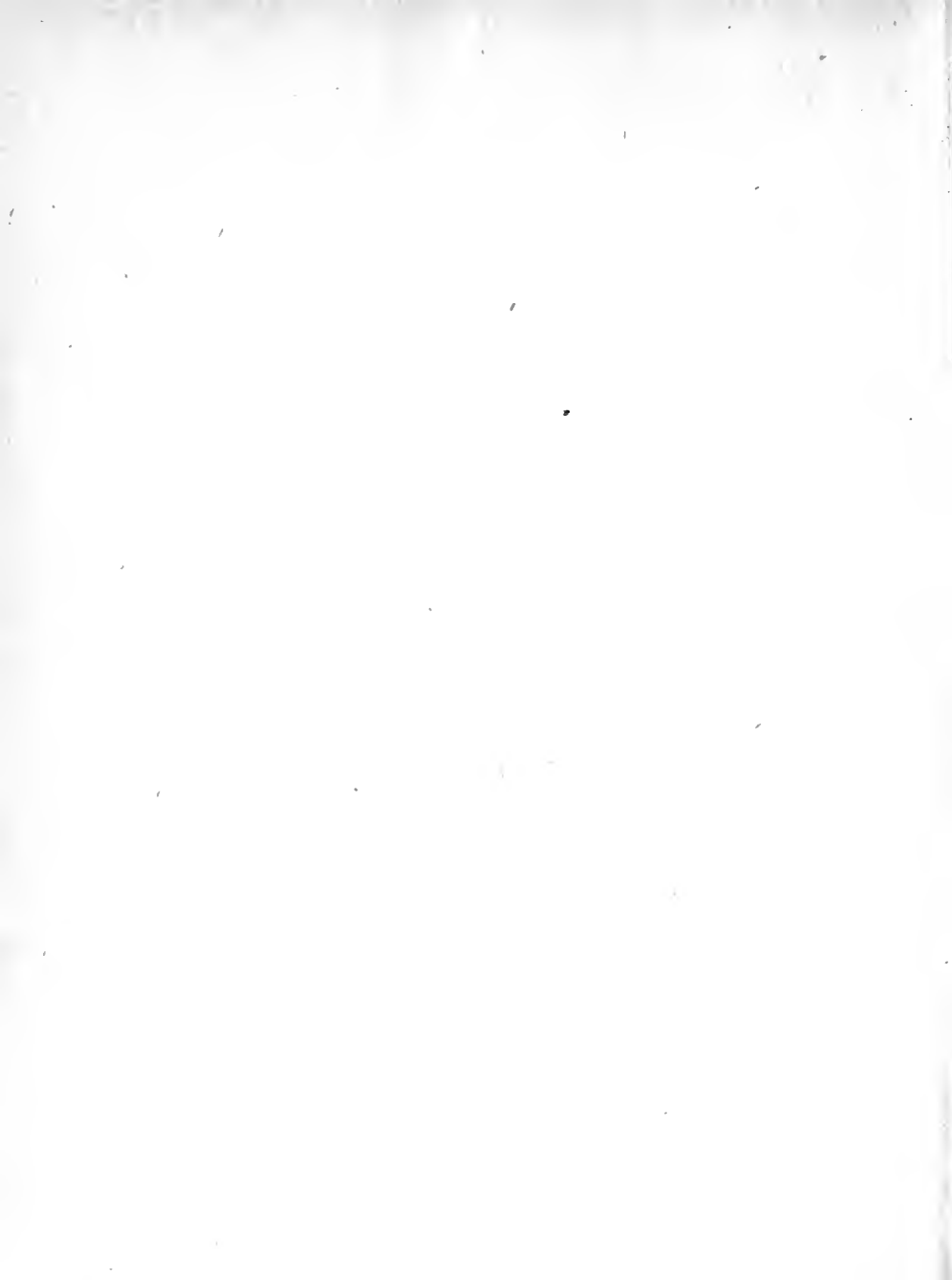
Fate's
Voice

and Heaven and Hell meet : all the depths of the depths of Night's ocean are ablaze with icy cold star-streams, where myriads of myriads of worlds sing eternally the song of God's creation.

O low black plains of earth, O wind-swept hills of Night, gazing into thy chaos and desolation man shall know that never shall he escape the footsteps of sorrow. Even as the sowers trod this day these ancient hills, so in this dark world shall man sow his fate, in the flowing seas of Change, from age to age. But gazing at the solemn star-strewn Night, where abides for aye the pure winnowed joy of creation that is God, gazing at the sowing of stars over earth man shall accept as a symbol that his fate is but as a grain of dust in the joy of the birth of worlds, content, when the grey dawn breaks, to go forth with the wind of the morning over the hills and begin once more the ever old freshening day.







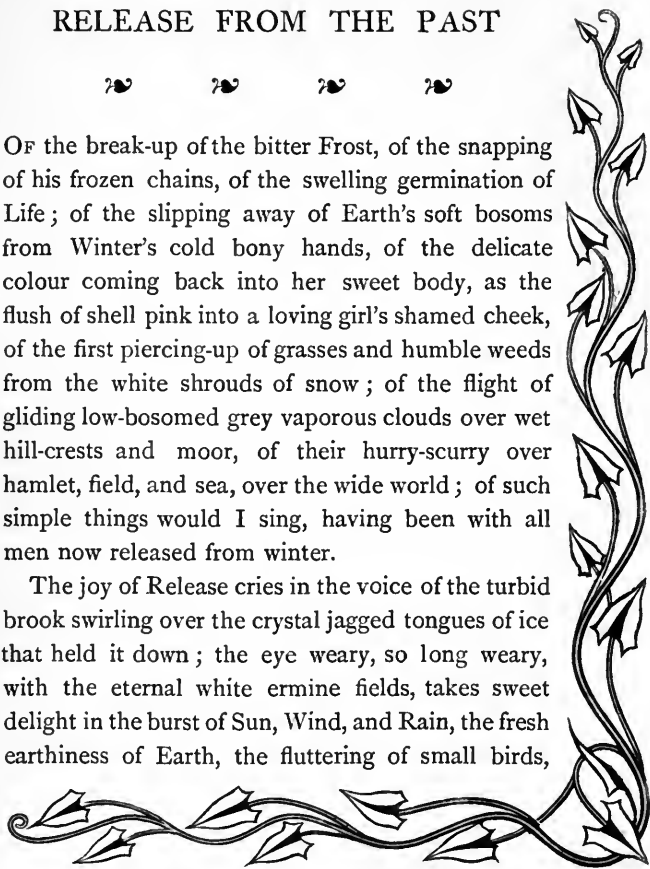
The Break-up of Frost

RELEASE FROM THE PAST



OF the break-up of the bitter Frost, of the snapping of his frozen chains, of the swelling germination of Life ; of the slipping away of Earth's soft bosoms from Winter's cold bony hands, of the delicate colour coming back into her sweet body, as the flush of shell pink into a loving girl's shamed cheek, of the first piercing-up of grasses and humble weeds from the white shrouds of snow ; of the flight of gliding low-bosomed grey vaporous clouds over wet hill-crests and moor, of their hurry-scurry over hamlet, field, and sea, over the wide world ; of such simple things would I sing, having been with all men now released from winter.

The joy of Release cries in the voice of the turbid brook swirling over the crystal jagged tongues of ice that held it down ; the eye weary, so long weary, with the eternal white ermine fields, takes sweet delight in the burst of Sun, Wind, and Rain, the fresh earthiness of Earth, the fluttering of small birds,

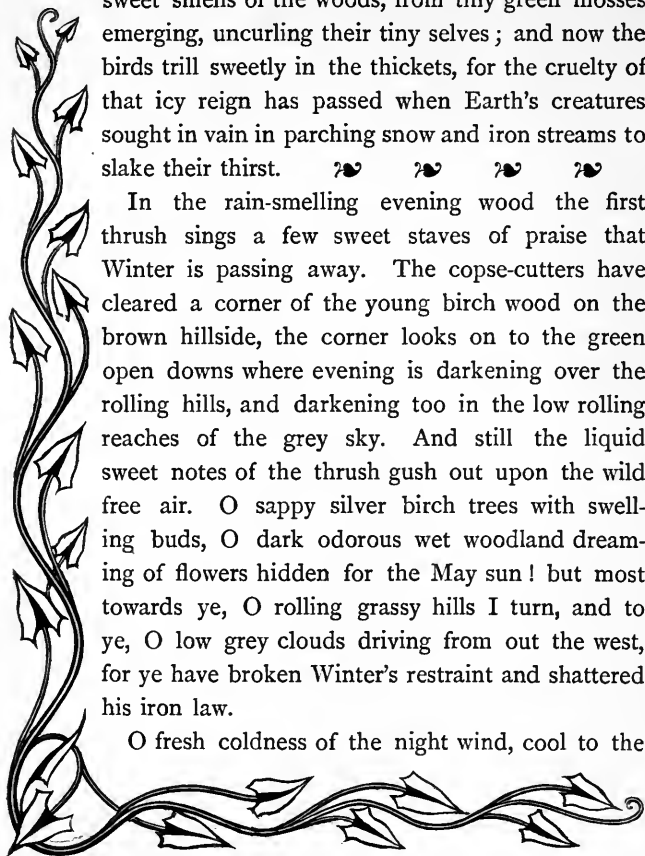


Release
from the
Past

flashing silvery white breasts and black bodies, a cloud of light uprising from the hedgerows, sparkling against the sun ; the heart takes simple delight in the sweet smells of the woods, from tiny green mosses emerging, uncurling their tiny selves ; and now the birds trill sweetly in the thickets, for the cruelty of that icy reign has passed when Earth's creatures sought in vain in parching snow and iron streams to slake their thirst. ? ? ? ?

In the rain-smelling evening wood the first thrush sings a few sweet staves of praise that Winter is passing away. The copse-cutters have cleared a corner of the young birch wood on the brown hillside, the corner looks on to the green open downs where evening is darkening over the rolling hills, and darkening too in the low rolling reaches of the grey sky. And still the liquid sweet notes of the thrush gush out upon the wild free air. O sappy silver birch trees with swelling buds, O dark odorous wet woodland dreaming of flowers hidden for the May sun ! but most towards ye, O rolling grassy hills I turn, and to ye, O low grey clouds driving from out the west, for ye have broken Winter's restraint and shattered his iron law.

O fresh coldness of the night wind, cool to the

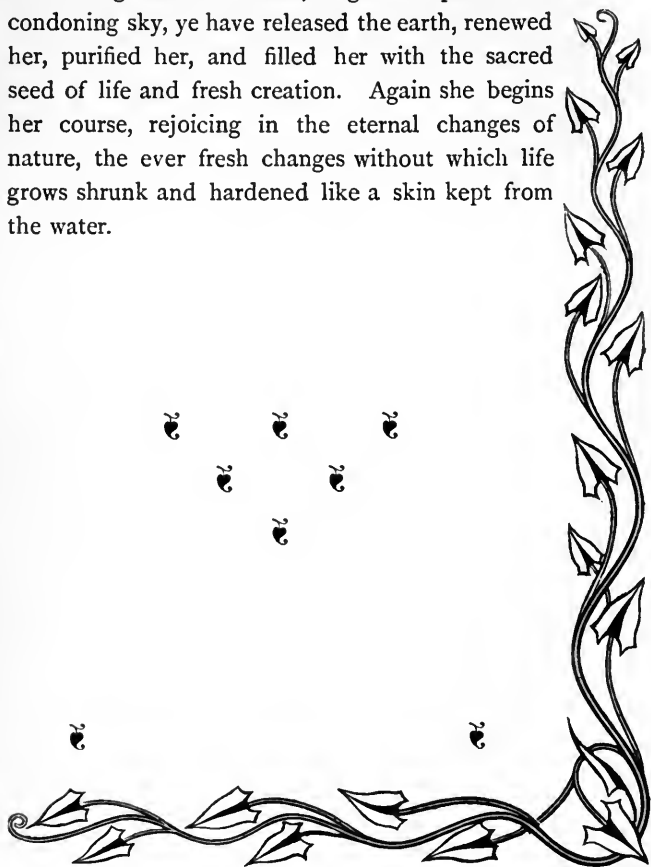


The Break-up of Frost

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flesh, to the tired labouring eyes, O great darkness
that uplifts and soothes the world, O wind passing
murmuring over the forests, O great impartial all-
condoning sky, ye have released the earth, renewed
her, purified her, and filled her with the sacred
seed of life and fresh creation. Again she begins
her course, rejoicing in the eternal changes of
nature, the ever fresh changes without which life
grows shrunk and hardened like a skin kept from
the water.

Release
from the
Past

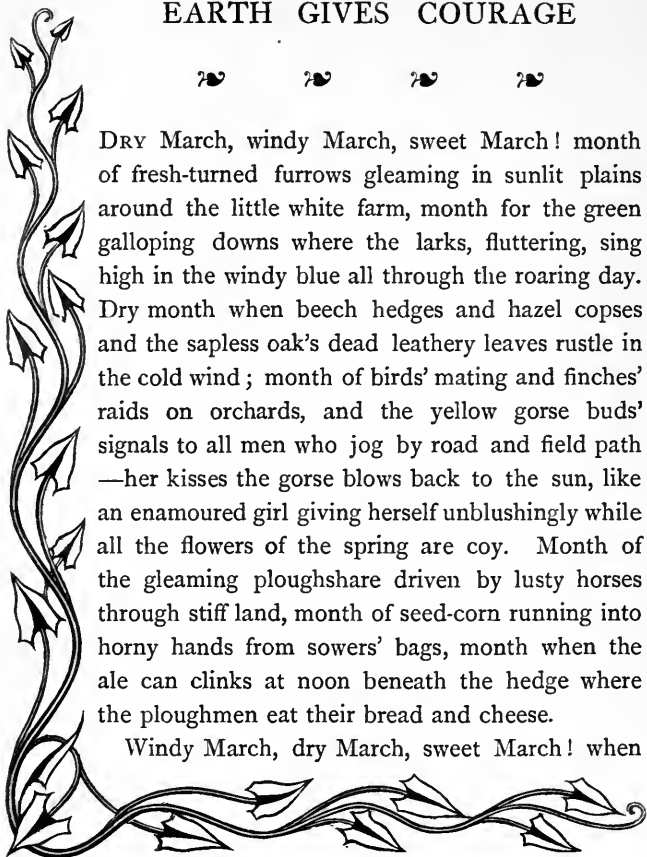


EARTH GIVES COURAGE



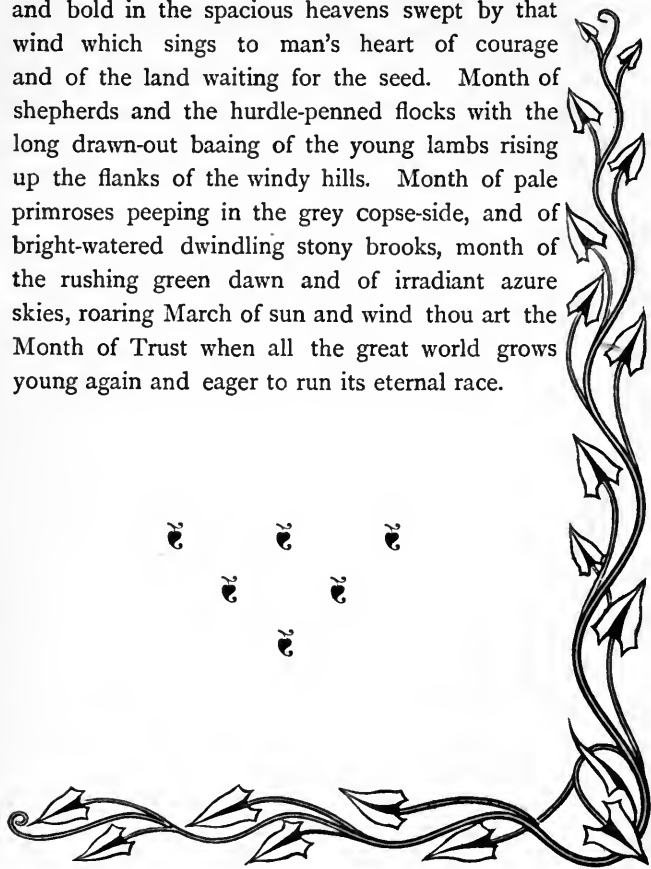
DRY March, windy March, sweet March! month of fresh-turned furrows gleaming in sunlit plains around the little white farm, month for the green galloping downs where the larks, fluttering, sing high in the windy blue all through the roaring day. Dry month when beech hedges and hazel copses and the sapless oak's dead leathery leaves rustle in the cold wind; month of birds' mating and finches' raids on orchards, and the yellow gorse buds' signals to all men who jog by road and field path—her kisses the gorse blows back to the sun, like an enamoured girl giving herself unblushingly while all the flowers of the spring are coy. Month of the gleaming ploughshare driven by lusty horses through stiff land, month of seed-corn running into horny hands from sowers' bags, month when the ale can clinks at noon beneath the hedge where the ploughmen eat their bread and cheese.

Windy March, dry March, sweet March! when



the wind is heard roaring, roaring all day long on the uplands, and at night, from the old farmhouse window all the great stars are seen standing clear and bold in the spacious heavens swept by that wind which sings to man's heart of courage and of the land waiting for the seed. Month of shepherds and the hurdle-penned flocks with the long drawn-out baaing of the young lambs rising up the flanks of the windy hills. Month of pale primroses peeping in the grey copse-side, and of bright-watered dwindling stony brooks, month of the rushing green dawn and of irradiant azure skies, roaring March of sun and wind thou art the Month of Trust when all the great world grows young again and eager to run its eternal race.

Earth
gives
Courage



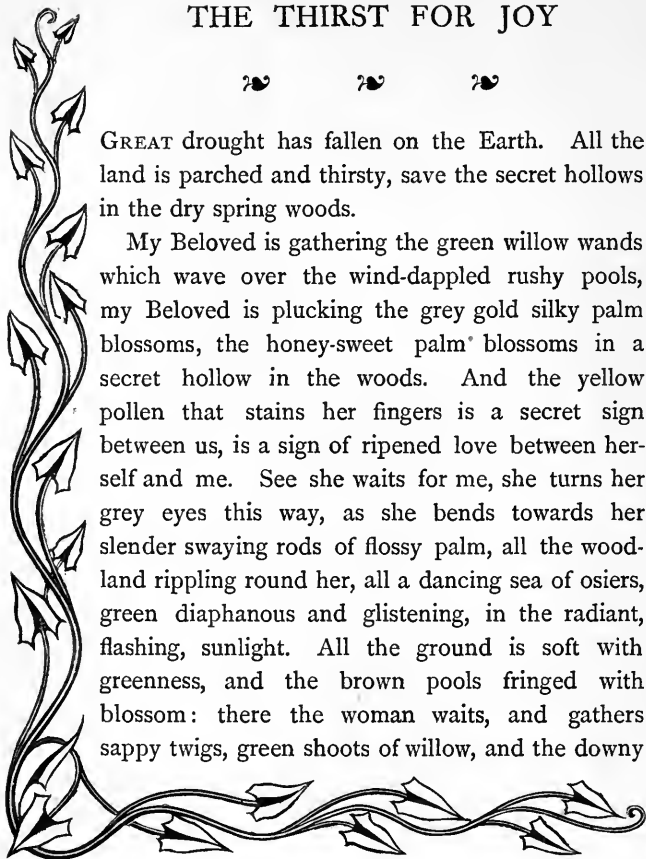
Yellow Palm in Thirsty Fields

THE THIRST FOR JOY



GREAT drought has fallen on the Earth. All the land is parched and thirsty, save the secret hollows in the dry spring woods.

My Beloved is gathering the green willow wands which wave over the wind-dappled rushy pools, my Beloved is plucking the grey gold silky palm blossoms, the honey-sweet palm blossoms in a secret hollow in the woods. And the yellow pollen that stains her fingers is a secret sign between us, is a sign of ripened love between herself and me. See she waits for me, she turns her grey eyes this way, as she bends towards her slender swaying rods of flossy palm, all the woodland rippling round her, all a dancing sea of osiers, green diaphanous and glistening, in the radiant, flashing, sunlight. All the ground is soft with greenness, and the brown pools fringed with blossom: there the woman waits, and gathers sappy twigs, green shoots of willow, and the downy



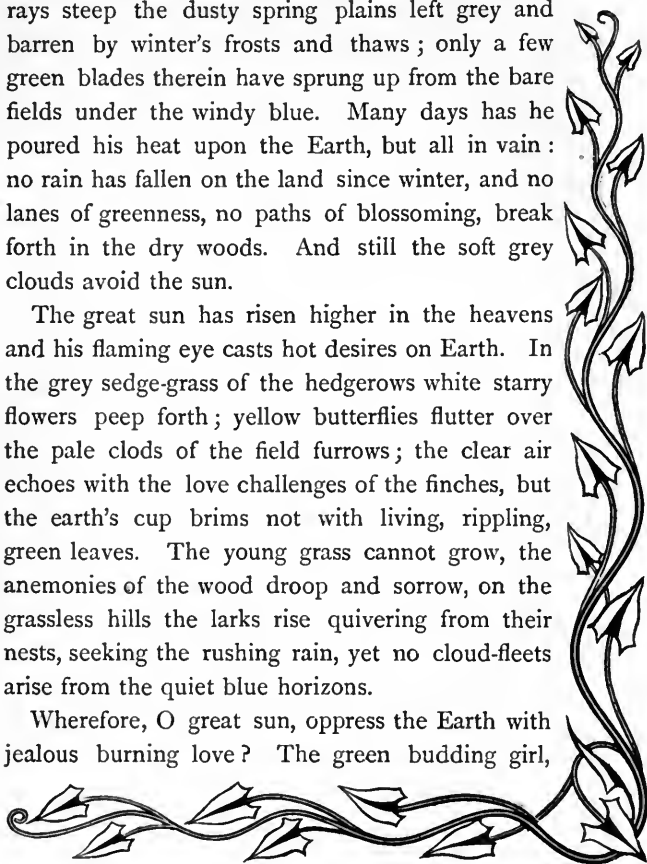
buds of grey palm : there the grey palm's honey fragrance is a hastening sign for me.

The
Thirst
for Joy

The great sun is journeying in the south, his rays steep the dusty spring plains left grey and barren by winter's frosts and thaws ; only a few green blades therein have sprung up from the bare fields under the windy blue. Many days has he poured his heat upon the Earth, but all in vain : no rain has fallen on the land since winter, and no lanes of greenness, no paths of blossoming, break forth in the dry woods. And still the soft grey clouds avoid the sun.

The great sun has risen higher in the heavens and his flaming eye casts hot desires on Earth. In the grey sedge-grass of the hedgerows white starry flowers peep forth ; yellow butterflies flutter over the pale clods of the field furrows ; the clear air echoes with the love challenges of the finches, but the earth's cup brims not with living, rippling, green leaves. The young grass cannot grow, the anemonies of the wood droop and sorrow, on the grassless hills the larks rise quivering from their nests, seeking the rushing rain, yet no cloud-fleets arise from the quiet blue horizons.

Wherefore, O great sun, oppress the Earth with jealous burning love ? The green budding girl,

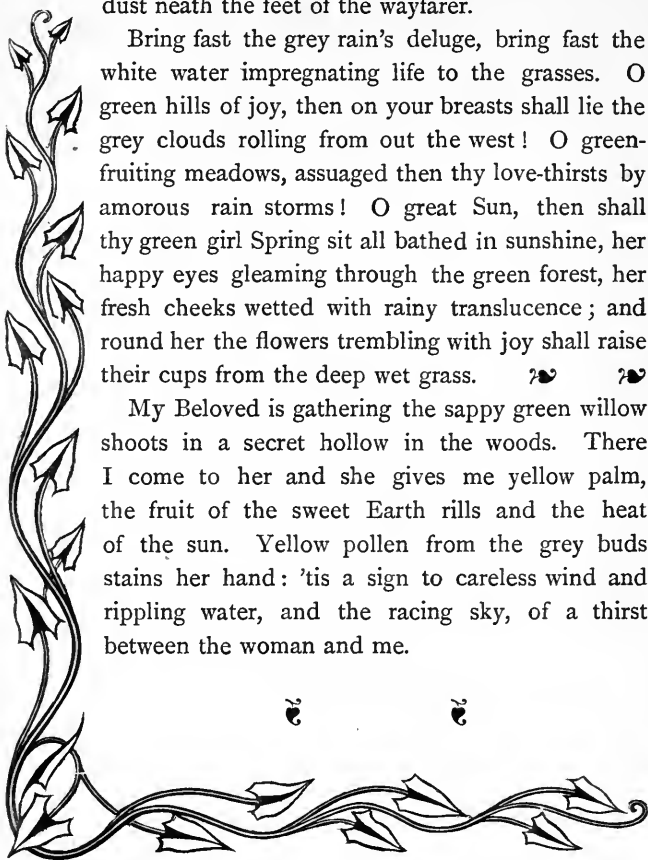


Yellow Palm in Thirsty Fields

The Thirst for Joy the Spring, will die, if thou yieldest not the cool fructifying rain. The soft breeze blows, but Earth lies panting: the dry clods crumble into dust neath the feet of the wayfarer.

Bring fast the grey rain's deluge, bring fast the white water impregnating life to the grasses. O green hills of joy, then on your breasts shall lie the grey clouds rolling from out the west! O green-fruited meadows, assuaged then thy love-thirsts by amorous rain storms! O great Sun, then shall thy green girl Spring sit all bathed in sunshine, her happy eyes gleaming through the green forest, her fresh cheeks wetted with rainy translucence; and round her the flowers trembling with joy shall raise their cups from the deep wet grass. ♡ ♡

My Beloved is gathering the sappy green willow shoots in a secret hollow in the woods. There I come to her and she gives me yellow palm, the fruit of the sweet Earth rills and the heat of the sun. Yellow pollen from the grey buds stains her hand: 'tis a sign to careless wind and rippling water, and the racing sky, of a thirst between the woman and me.



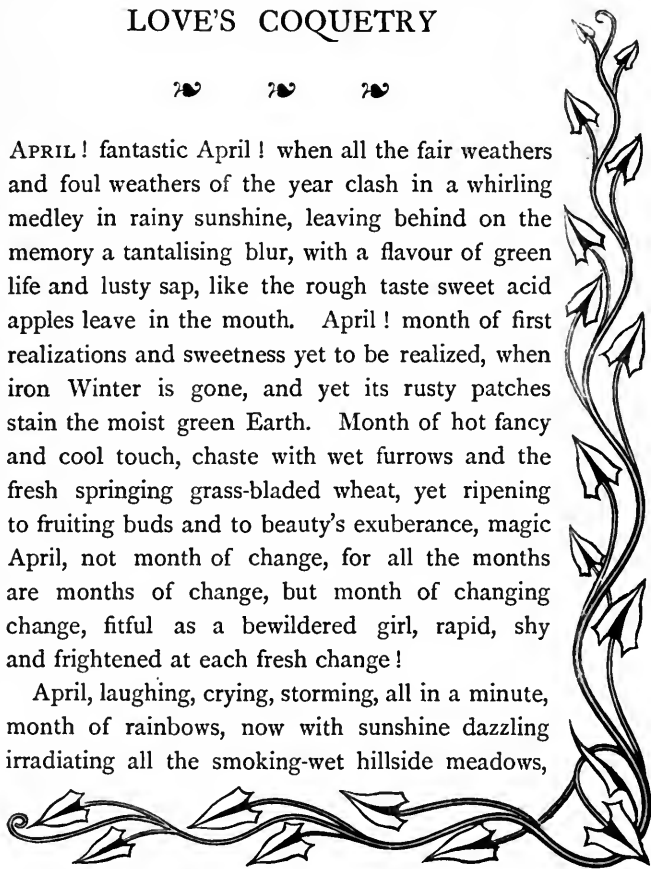
April

LOVE'S COQUETRY



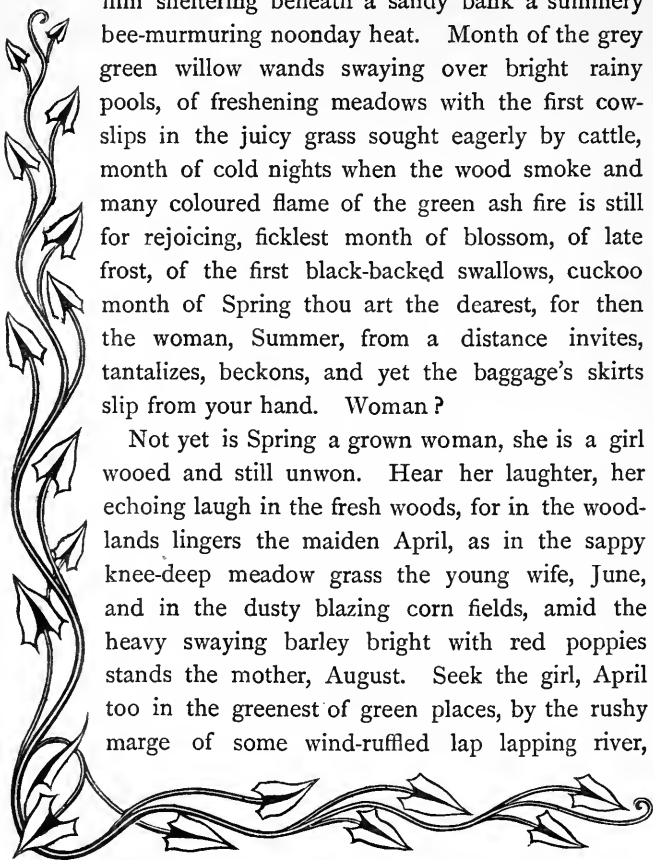
APRIL ! fantastic April ! when all the fair weathers and foul weathers of the year clash in a whirling medley in rainy sunshine, leaving behind on the memory a tantalising blur, with a flavour of green life and lusty sap, like the rough taste sweet acid apples leave in the mouth. April ! month of first realizations and sweetness yet to be realized, when iron Winter is gone, and yet its rusty patches stain the moist green Earth. Month of hot fancy and cool touch, chaste with wet furrows and the fresh springing grass-bladed wheat, yet ripening to fruiting buds and to beauty's exuberance, magic April, not month of change, for all the months are months of change, but month of changing change, fitful as a bewildered girl, rapid, shy and frightened at each fresh change !

April, laughing, crying, storming, all in a minute, month of rainbows, now with sunshine dazzling irradiating all the smoking-wet hillside meadows,



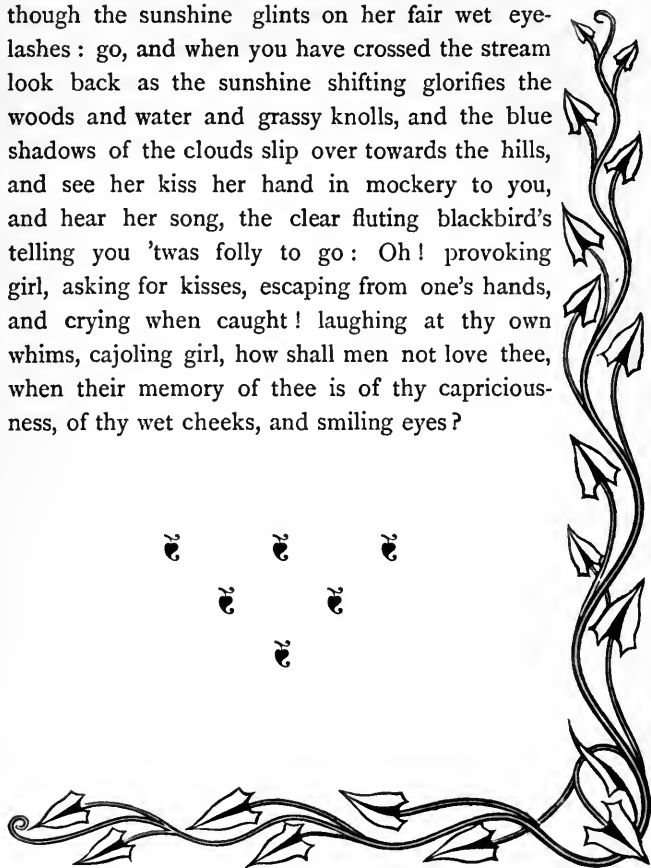
*Love's
Coquetry* now showering on the traveller in the valley lanes
merciless white-lashing rain squalls bursting from
big-bellied fast-flying storm clouds, now bringing
him sheltering beneath a sandy bank a summery
bee-murmuring noonday heat. Month of the grey
green willow wands swaying over bright rainy
pools, of freshening meadows with the first cow-
slips in the juicy grass sought eagerly by cattle,
month of cold nights when the wood smoke and
many coloured flame of the green ash fire is still
for rejoicing, ficklest month of blossom, of late
frost, of the first black-backed swallows, cuckoo
month of Spring thou art the dearest, for then
the woman, Summer, from a distance invites,
tantalizes, beckons, and yet the baggage's skirts
slip from your hand. Woman?

Not yet is Spring a grown woman, she is a girl
wooded and still unwon. Hear her laughter, her
echoing laugh in the fresh woods, for in the wood-
lands lingers the maiden April, as in the sappy
knee-deep meadow grass the young wife, June,
and in the dusty blazing corn fields, amid the
heavy swaying barley bright with red poppies
stands the mother, August. Seek the girl, April
too in the greenest of green places, by the rushy
marge of some wind-ruffled lap lapping river,




edged with blue osiers bending from the black river-smelling earth. Seek her, and she turns away her head, she answers you with rainy tears, though the sunshine glints on her fair wet eyelashes : go, and when you have crossed the stream look back as the sunshine shifting glorifies the woods and water and grassy knolls, and the blue shadows of the clouds slip over towards the hills, and see her kiss her hand in mockery to you, and hear her song, the clear fluting blackbird's telling you 'twas folly to go : Oh ! provoking girl, asking for kisses, escaping from one's hands, and crying when caught ! laughing at thy own whims, cajoling girl, how shall men not love thee, when their memory of thee is of thy capriciousness, of thy wet cheeks, and smiling eyes ?

Love's
Toquetry




CONSUMMATION

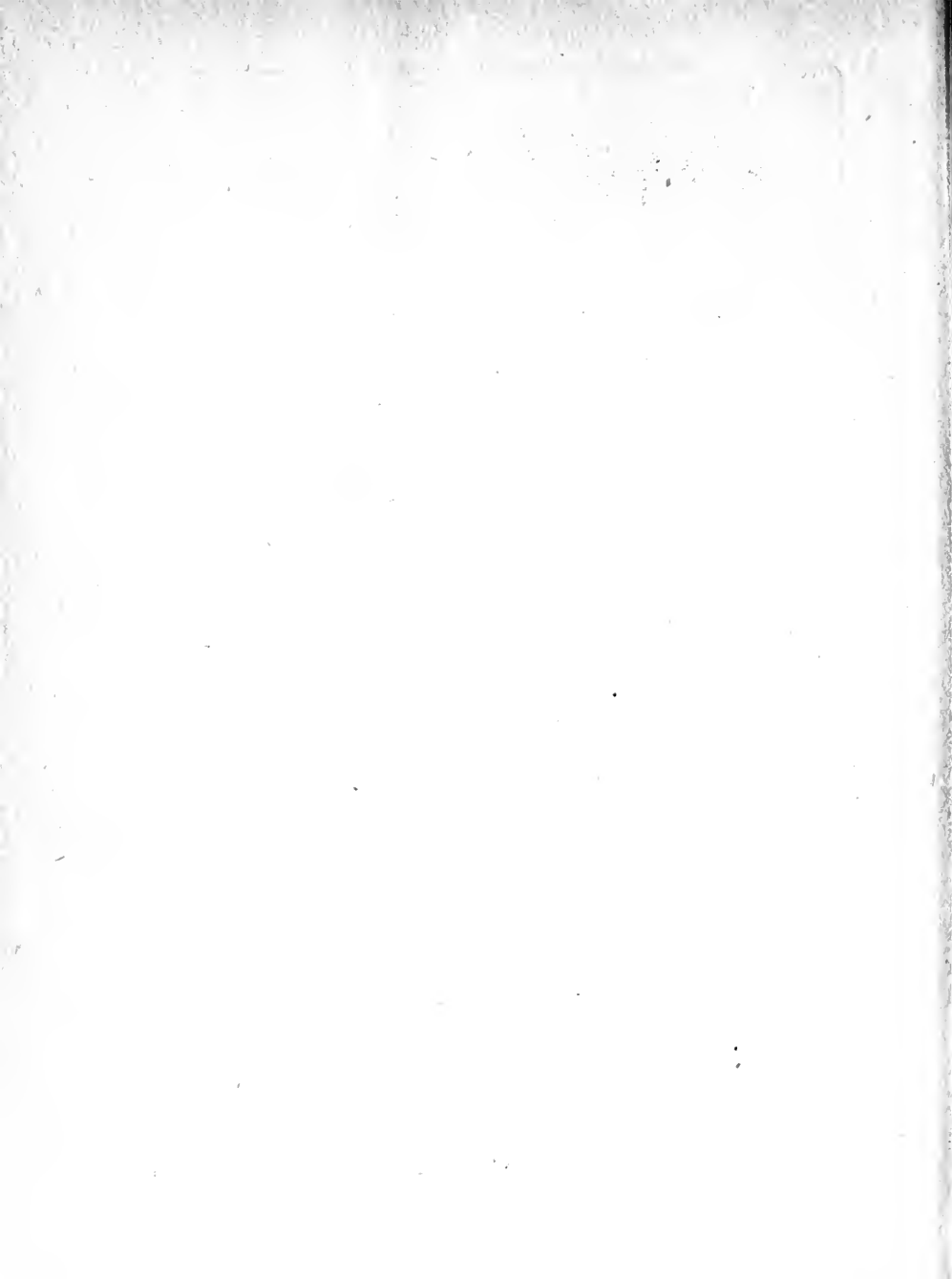
A vertical decorative vine with several leaves and small flowers, running along the left side of the text.

THE great Wind rushes through the star-clear heavens blowing from angry cross-foaming seas along the windy shore, raging far far away in the night over desolate sandhills and fens, singing to listening Eternity as it goes, its unfathomable song. And I lie waiting, while Earth is swathed in the embrace of night. And waiting, waiting for my Beloved I hear the ever-grinding of the shore, the roaring of the ever-breaking sea, and in my face is cast the salty stinging spray, and overwhelmed I too am whirled by a deep surging unfathomable tide. ? ? ? ?

I hear the chaunt of the lawless Wind as it passes : I hear its voice in the sterile bowing reeds of the salt shore. The Wind has raced before me to meet my love as she comes, as she journeys. It envelopes her, it drinks of her sweetness, it kisses her eyes and throat as she struggles onward in the darkness. Only the lawless Wind

A horizontal decorative vine with several leaves and small flowers, running along the bottom of the text.





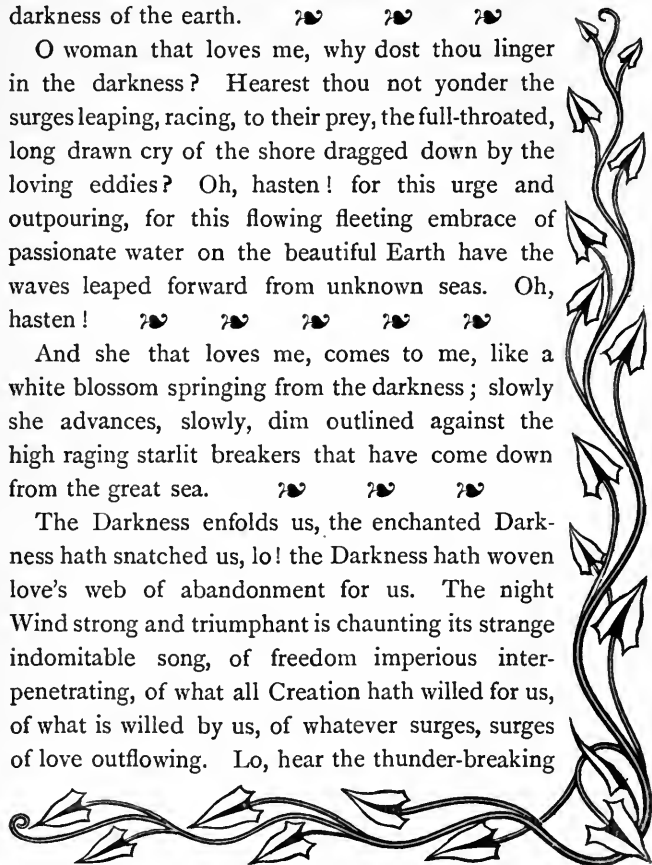
blowing over the wide world, only the lawless Wind
and I know of joy uncontrolled, bursting from
the swartness of the sea, flowering in the sweet
darkness of the earth. ? ? ?

Consum-
marion

O woman that loves me, why dost thou linger
in the darkness? Hearest thou not yonder the
surges leaping, racing, to their prey, the full-throated,
long drawn cry of the shore dragged down by the
loving eddies? Oh, hasten! for this urge and
outpouring, for this flowing fleeting embrace of
passionate water on the beautiful Earth have the
waves leaped forward from unknown seas. Oh,
hasten! ? ? ? ? ?

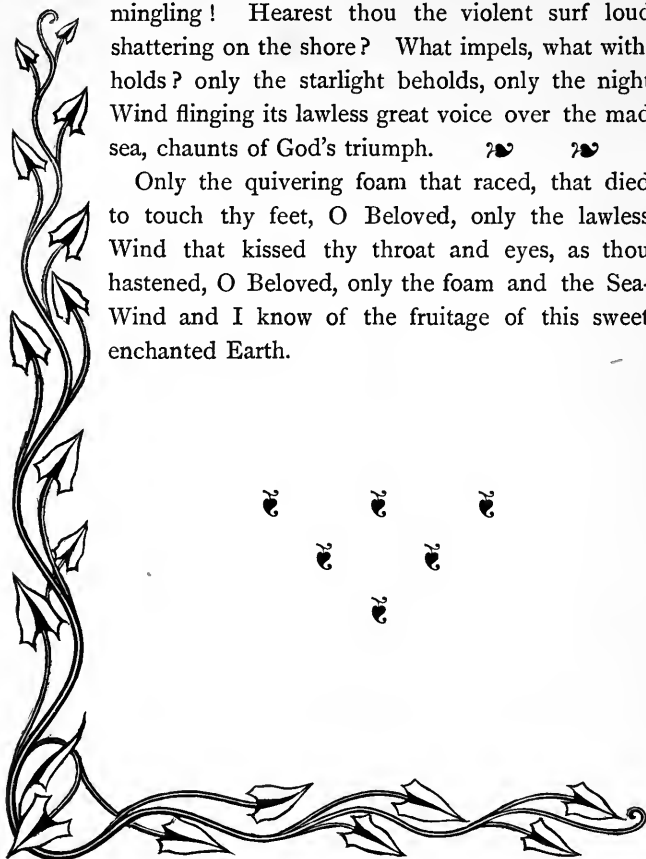
And she that loves me, comes to me, like a
white blossom springing from the darkness; slowly
she advances, slowly, dim outlined against the
high raging starlit breakers that have come down
from the great sea. ? ? ?

The Darkness enfolds us, the enchanted Dark-
ness hath snatched us, lo! the Darkness hath woven
love's web of abandonment for us. The night
Wind strong and triumphant is chaunting its strange
indomitable song, of freedom imperious inter-
penetrating, of what all Creation hath willed for us,
of what is willed by us, of whatever surges, surges
of love outflowing. Lo, hear the thunder-breaking



Consum- seas, lo, hear the Wind riding on the hissing foam-
mation crests. Ah, 'tis the mingling song of two rushing
 rivers, their waters nearing! nearing! striking!
 mingling! Hearest thou the violent surf loud
 shattering on the shore? What impels, what with-
 holds? only the starlight beholds, only the night
 Wind flinging its lawless great voice over the mad
 sea, chaunts of God's triumph. ♪ ♪

Only the quivering foam that raced, that died
 to touch thy feet, O Beloved, only the lawless
 Wind that kissed thy throat and eyes, as thou
 hastened, O Beloved, only the foam and the Sea-
 Wind and I know of the fruitage of this sweet
 enchanted Earth.



The Stream's Song in Spring

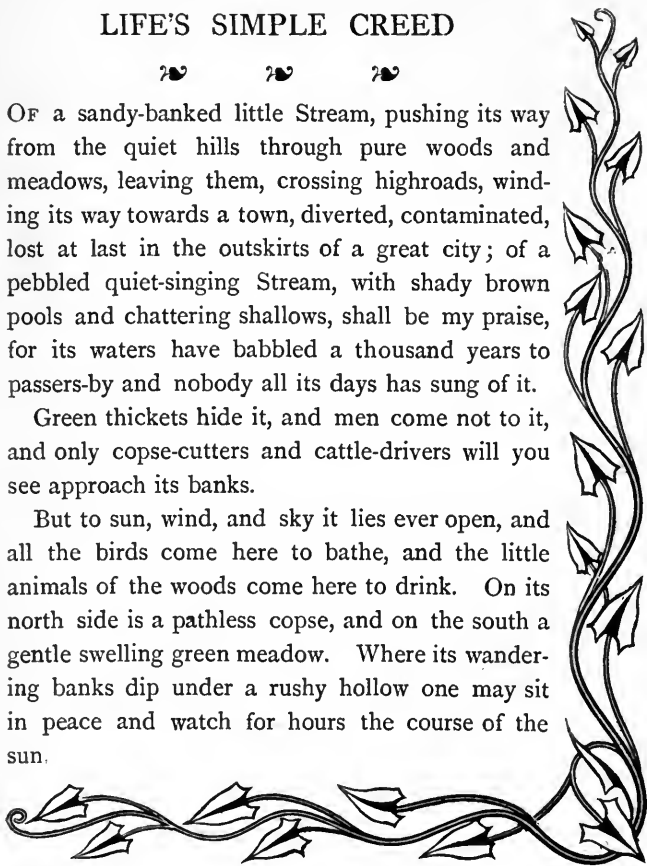
LIFE'S SIMPLE CREED



OF a sandy-banked little Stream, pushing its way from the quiet hills through pure woods and meadows, leaving them, crossing highroads, winding its way towards a town, diverted, contaminated, lost at last in the outskirts of a great city; of a pebbled quiet-singing Stream, with shady brown pools and chattering shallows, shall be my praise, for its waters have babbled a thousand years to passers-by and nobody all its days has sung of it.

Green thickets hide it, and men come not to it, and only copse-cutters and cattle-drivers will you see approach its banks.

But to sun, wind, and sky it lies ever open, and all the birds come here to bathe, and the little animals of the woods come here to drink. On its north side is a pathless copse, and on the south a gentle swelling green meadow. Where its wandering banks dip under a rushy hollow one may sit in peace and watch for hours the course of the sun.



The Stream's Song in Spring

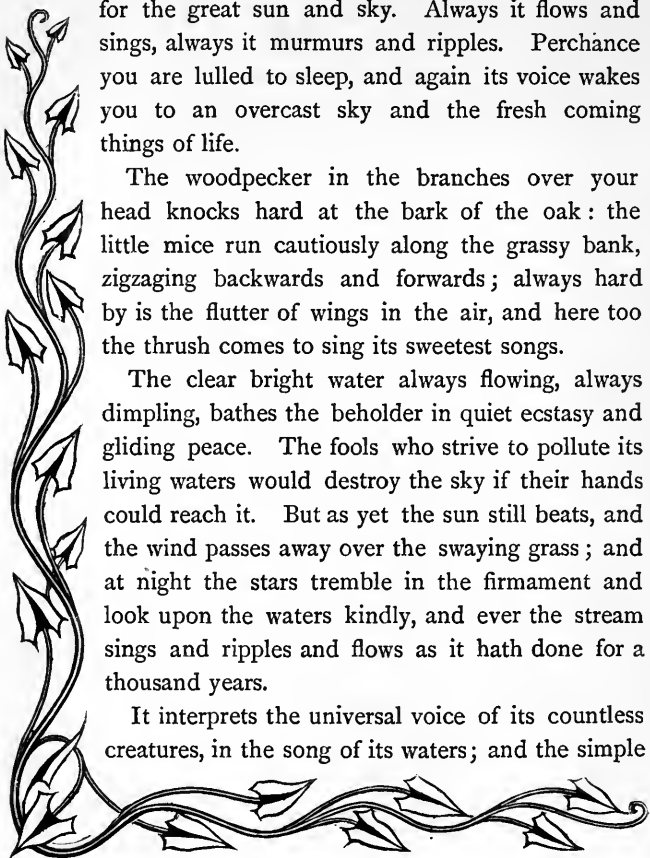
Life's
Simple
Credo

On and on flows the Stream, while the day passes, rippling a tender water-soft song. Simple music it makes out of stones, a song of quiet joy for the great sun and sky. Always it flows and sings, always it murmurs and ripples. Perchance you are lulled to sleep, and again its voice wakes you to an overcast sky and the fresh coming things of life.

The woodpecker in the branches over your head knocks hard at the bark of the oak: the little mice run cautiously along the grassy bank, zigzagging backwards and forwards; always hard by is the flutter of wings in the air, and here too the thrush comes to sing its sweetest songs.

The clear bright water always flowing, always dimpling, bathes the beholder in quiet ecstasy and gliding peace. The fools who strive to pollute its living waters would destroy the sky if their hands could reach it. But as yet the sun still beats, and the wind passes away over the swaying grass; and at night the stars tremble in the firmament and look upon the waters kindly, and ever the stream sings and ripples and flows as it hath done for a thousand years.

It interprets the universal voice of its countless creatures, in the song of its waters; and the simple



The Stream's Song in Spring

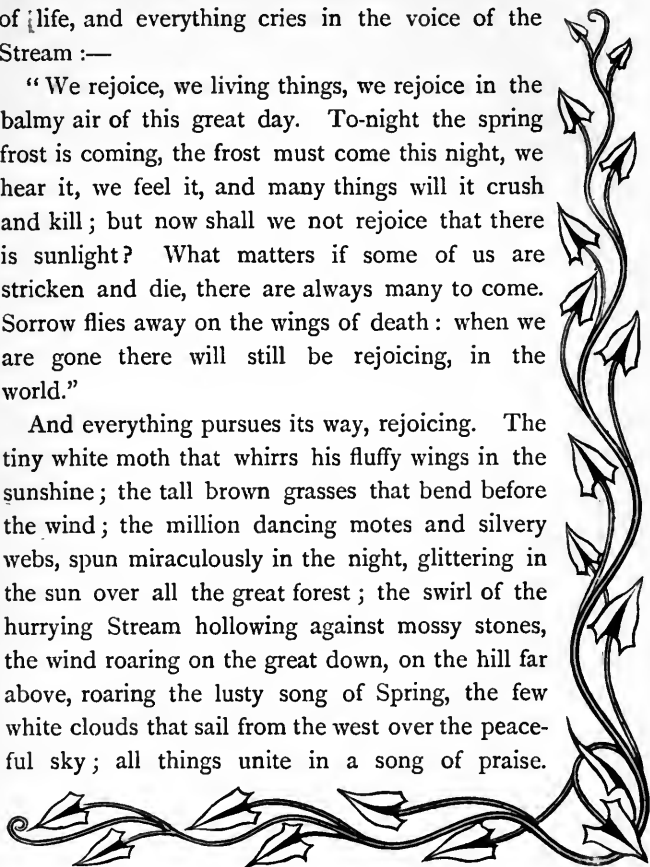
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creed of the trees and grasses whereby they spring up and flourish and pass away. From the meanest to the greatest everything delights in exuberance of life, and everything cries in the voice of the Stream :—

Life's
Simple
Tree

“ We rejoice, we living things, we rejoice in the balmy air of this great day. To-night the spring frost is coming, the frost must come this night, we hear it, we feel it, and many things will it crush and kill ; but now shall we not rejoice that there is sunlight ? What matters if some of us are stricken and die, there are always many to come. Sorrow flies away on the wings of death : when we are gone there will still be rejoicing, in the world.”

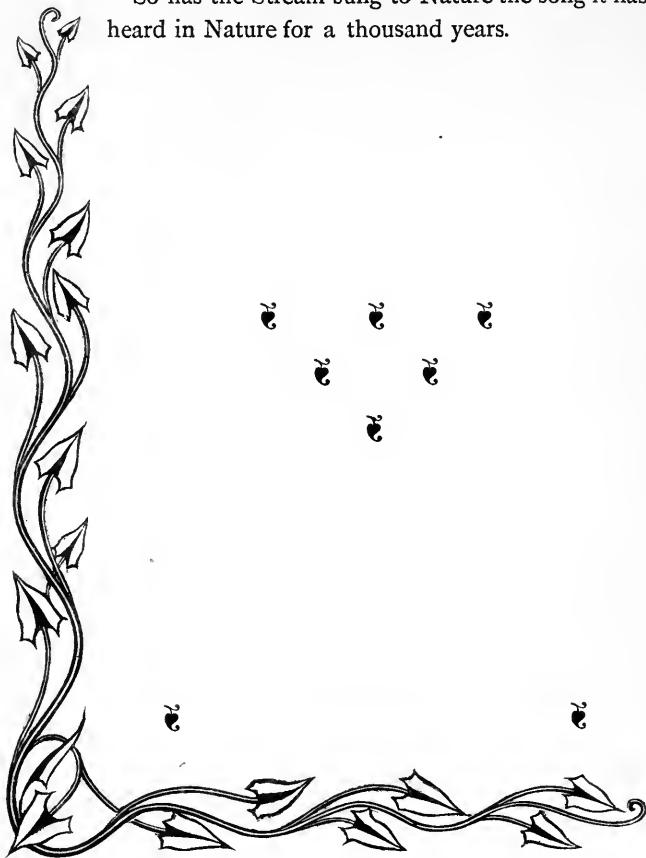
And everything pursues its way, rejoicing. The tiny white moth that whirrs his fluffy wings in the sunshine ; the tall brown grasses that bend before the wind ; the million dancing motes and silvery webs, spun miraculously in the night, glittering in the sun over all the great forest ; the swirl of the hurrying Stream hollowing against mossy stones, the wind roaring on the great down, on the hill far above, roaring the lusty song of Spring, the few white clouds that sail from the west over the peaceful sky ; all things unite in a song of praise.



The Stream's Song in Spring

Life's "Sorrow flies away on the wings of death : we die,
Simple but others will live and flourish in the sunshine.
Tree'd Rejoice, for the great earth bids you rejoice."

So has the Stream sung to Nature the song it has
heard in Nature for a thousand years.



Bright Green Leaves

BEAUTY SHALL CONQUER



IN the fresh green wood, youthful and vigorous where sunshine drifts through crooked wind-blown branches to the wet and grassy Earth, bright green leaves, transparent panes of lusty light, spring up in emerald flames, the dear Earth's testimony of joy soaring to the boundless blue of the burning sky. Myriads of leaves, young green leaves freshly uncurled, with glistening sap, wantoning in the breeze, roof in grass-shaded thickets where dallying shadows sing the ancient song of men and women, of how they loved, and how long long ago the thickets hid them. Green-spraying labyrinths, the exuberance of nature's lovely nakedness, blossoming into Creation at the touch of the hot sun, wind into oaken forest fastnesses where mighty shadowed palaces of giant trees sleep on in silence : all the fairy court is in the young green woods this day.



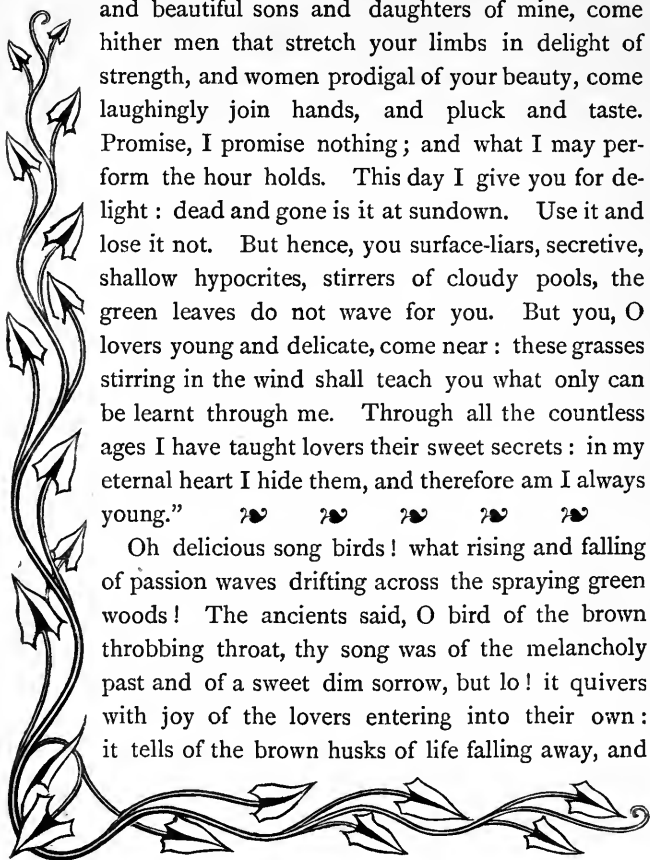
All Nature's strength wells up in this green revelry



Beauty
shall
Conquer

of the woods, Nature as strong to-day as yesterday, to-morrow as to-day. "Come hither, come hither," cries a voice from the dense underwoods, "all hardy and beautiful sons and daughters of mine, come hither men that stretch your limbs in delight of strength, and women prodigal of your beauty, come laughingly join hands, and pluck and taste. Promise, I promise nothing; and what I may perform the hour holds. This day I give you for delight: dead and gone is it at sundown. Use it and lose it not. But hence, you surface-liars, secretive, shallow hypocrites, stirrers of cloudy pools, the green leaves do not wave for you. But you, O lovers young and delicate, come near: these grasses stirring in the wind shall teach you what only can be learnt through me. Through all the countless ages I have taught lovers their sweet secrets: in my eternal heart I hide them, and therefore am I always young." ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡

Oh delicious song birds! what rising and falling of passion waves drifting across the spraying green woods! The ancients said, O bird of the brown throbbing throat, thy song was of the melancholy past and of a sweet dim sorrow, but lo! it quivers with joy of the lovers entering into their own: it tells of the brown husks of life falling away, and



the green rind gleaming beneath. O birds, will you never stop trilling! O lovers, is it then true that love is never ashamed? ? ?

O young Earth, fresh Earth, Earth of ecstasy, would that we the grey multitudes with our pale pleasures had ne'er been born in thy green lap! Oh grant that memory of us be lost when to the strong young clear-eyed race shall pass thy mountains, plains, and forests. Grant then that our cities lie buried deep, and thy heart, O Earth, betrays us not, when the surf waves break athwart the dance of the twining laughing girls, at purple eve, on the great sea's windy shore.



*"Faith died in the Crowd: by the grey sea's side
In the woods and the fields I found it spring.
Thy eyes broke open my heart, Girl, and wide
The world lay eager, fresh blossoming."*



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An imaged world

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